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THE *RARE*

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ENGLISH IN INDIA:

LETTERS FROM NAGPORE.

WRITTEN IN 1857—58.

BY

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(4)



"So far from thinking with you that my reforming efforts are useless, I hold them to be of consequence. In all struggles the meanest, if he does his utmost, is of use: the drum-boy, eight years old, ought to imagine the battle rests on himself and his drum."—SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

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1859



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"Speciosities are specious—ah me! A Cagliostro, many Cagliostros, prominent world-leaders, do prosper by their quackery for a day. It is like a forged bank-note; they get it passed out of *their* worthless hands: others, not they, have to smart for it. Nature bursts up in fire-flames, French Revolutions, and such like, proclaiming with terrible veracity that forged notes are forged."

Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-Worship, p. 69.

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* These letters originally appeared in the *Leader* and *Daily News* newspapers, and have merely received a few verbal corrections.



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LETTERS FROM NAGPORE.

LETTER I.

THE INDIAN ARMY.

NAGPORE, *November, 1857.*

THE map of India will show you what a central position this large city occupies in the peninsula; and the course of events within the last six months has proved it to be as critical and influential a position politically as it is locally central. Here the two great languages of Central and Western India, the Mahratta and the Oordoo, meet and partially coalesce, and nearly all the races of Hindostan, the Deccan, and the Carnatic are to be found either settled in trade or in the public service, or following in the train of the large brigade of Madras troops. For with the exception of two or three small detachments of one or two companies on the banks of the Nerbudda, this has been for years the advanced post of the Madras army. Here then, if anywhere, the contagion of the mutiny would first have affected that large body of native troops who have hitherto proved themselves so worthy of reliance.



Dreadful as were the events of last May, June, July, and August, great as have been our humiliation and loss, we have for this time escaped from possibilities a thousand times more appalling. Nothing less than a war of extermination, the natural plan of a weak and ignorant people struggling against a dominant alien race, was aimed at by the Nana Sahib and the other spontaneous leaders of the insurrection; nothing less was hoped by all, and fully expected by the great majority of the mutineers and rebels than that their signal would be taken and their example followed by all the Nawabs and Rajahs of India, and by the armies of the three presidencies, and in short that a simultaneous rising should take place all over the peninsula. None but the wilfully blind can fail to see how nearly their expectations were fulfilled. The Bombay army, though far from the scene of action, and but partially associated in race and customs with the actors, has in a sufficiently alarming manner responded to the cry for war and vengeance on the European masters of India. The Madras army has come through the crisis without any outward agitation; but those who know them best know well where the sympathies of the sepoys were during the uncertain and anxious period of this terrible outbreak. The Madras army has always been kept in a state of stricter discipline than the Bengal army, and its ranks are in a great measure



recruited from humbler and more tractable ranks of the population. But more than one-third of its numbers is composed of Mussulmans, and a good proportion of these are what is called "ashraff," or nobly born, men of respectable families, who formerly, according to their traditions, could aspire to posts of the greatest distinction in the service of the Nabobs and Rajahs of the Deccan, Mysore, and the Carnatic. Our great mistake in almost every department of the Government and administration of India has always been the notion that the natives were a cold, spiritless race, who cared for nothing but the satisfaction of their daily wants, and who were almost entirely devoid of ambition, national feeling, and attachment to their ancient princes and nobles. From sheer want of sympathy our Government has been purely *doctrinaire*, unable to believe that a well-arranged and well-intended *system* could ever fail to produce the desired result, and forgetting that no machine can ever be stronger than its weakest point. Our weakest point has been caused by the deluge of young ignorant Englishmen, whom the lust of patronage has sent forth in a stream, increasing steadily during the last quarter of a century. This had led to the establishment of the "damned nigger" system in every department, civil and military. Boys just emancipated from school, who care for nothing but beer and billiards, whose very ignorance of their



language and customs makes them dislike and despise their native subordinates, are placed in charge of companies of sepoy; and the sepoy is told, and the world is told, that the native troops can do nothing without their European officers. The fact is that the sepoy, like all troops, will not fight without leaders, and the European officers are the only leaders they have; the so-called native officers, the Subadars and Jemadars, are for the most part old worn-out men, and even in the Bombay army, where promotion by seniority is not the rule as it was in the *late* Bengal army, and as it is in a slightly modified form in the Madras army, the native officers are not men calculated by any superiority of social rank, erudition, or distinction, to command the respect or obedience of their men. They have all sprung from the ranks, and they have at once too little and too much influence with the common sepoy—too little from their possessing no personal claims to respectful consideration, too much from their prejudices and predilections being identical with those of the common sepoy, in whose ranks their own brothers and sons are serving; so that in a time of temptation and excitement they can do nothing but follow the multitude, with whose objects they cannot but sympathize, or, should the feeling of duty be paramount, devote themselves and die with the European officers. Resist the tide they



cannot, and but seldom, it is said, have the native officers of the mutinous regiments been able to preserve their rank in the rebels' camp; they have had to give way to leaders chosen for their prowess or intelligence.

The "damned nigger" delusion and the lust of patronage, in defiance of facts and experience, have persuaded our rulers that there is no such thing as a native gentleman in existence—no possibility of our inducing any native to qualify himself for the position of a really trustworthy officer of rank over the native soldiery. There are several stereotyped objections, besides, to any admission of natives to such posts; but they are really unworthy of notice in the presence of the total and final smash of the Bengal army on the "damned-nigger"-and-beer-and-billiard-Ensign system. The break-down, after all, has been in the European officers. They have proved themselves, throughout the late mutinies, to be utterly useless as a part of the regimental establishment. They showed themselves to have no commanding or restraining power over their men, and they were invariably up to the last moment utterly ignorant of their men's intentions or views. They had, in fact, nothing in common with them, no influence over them. The native officers, for the reasons already detailed, were equally useless, and as unwilling to give information as the European officers



were unable to obtain it. The fact is, that the European officers—with the exception of about two or three in each regiment, of whom the commanding officer is *occasionally* one—are in the Madras and Bombay armies now as they were in the late Bengal army, perfect nonentities, with hardly any duties or responsibilities, and no inclination to discharge even those. In the field of battle, in active service, they feel themselves called upon for exertion; they have a motive and an object, and they behave as English gentlemen always do. The duty in the field, however arduous, is usually for the regimental officers simple and straightforward. The sepoy understands them, and they understand the sepoys under such circumstances, and they learn to appreciate their respective good qualities. There are good men among the officers of the Indian army, as all may see in those who are brought forward and placed in positions of activity and responsibility; but ordinary regimental duty, without authority or the possibility of useful action, which oppresses all alike, from the colonel bound by the fetters of routine and centralization, down to the ensign whose ignorance and instinctive dislike of “blacks” hand him over to beer and billiards, must be demoralizing and depressing beyond all other spheres of existence. And it is so. Hundreds of promising boys are ruined by it in body and soul. I trust I shall not be misunder-



THE INDIAN ARMY.

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stood. I am not disparaging my young countrymen; I know the stuff they are made of; all our best men, after all, have been drawn from the ranks of our writers and cadets. Give them work and they will do it. But it is to their useless position, to their worse than superfluous numbers, to the vile system of patronage, and intrusion of unqualified Europeans into every place of honour and emolument, to the exclusion and discouragement and degradation of natives, that I object.

And after all, even setting aside for the moment the grand explosion and collapse of the Bengal army, what earthly excuse has there ever been for this deluge of young European officers, who have destroyed the self-respect, alienated the affections, and washed the spirit out of our sepoys? Our local and, as they are called, irregular regiments, both cavalry and infantry, are quite equal in appearance and steadiness on parade to the average of regiments of the line with the full complement of European officers, and have always proved themselves quite equal in their conduct under fire. The Irregular Cavalry regiments of the Hyderabad contingent, who are better paid than the majority of such corps, are far superior in appearance and for all practical purposes to any of our regular native cavalry corps, and cost, man for man, less than a half of the expense of the regular regiments.



LETTERS FROM NAGPORE.

CSL

The truth is, that the whole establishment of our Indian army must be remodelled, and, in my opinion, much reduced. It has far outgrown the requirements and the financial endurance of the Indian empire. Our sole strength and really reliable reserve lie in the European troops, yet we have kept up an enormous regular army, with its costly machinery of staff and commissariat and European officers, whose pay (mark this) amounts to nearly half of the entire military expenditure of the empire, and employ that army in duties of domestic security and police, mounting guard over treasuries, escorting treasure, guarding gaols, escorting convicts, and the like, which could be equally well done by armed police at one quarter of the expense. At the same time, while this pampered and pipe-clayed infantry was augmented beyond all necessity, except that of patronage, the peculiar martial growth of the country, if I may call them so, the natural, indigenous, ready-made warriors of India, who will spring forward in any numbers at the word of command, mounted and armed, and who will do tolerably good service without any drill or regimental system whatever, who ask for no pensions, or tents, or commissariat, or dry-nursing whatever, these invaluable troops, the Irregular Cavalry of India, have been neglected and starved—their pay cut down to starvation point, and their old customs and privileges so



destroyed or modified as to discourage as much as possible any native of the rank of a nobleman or gentleman from serving in the Irregular Cavalry as an officer. Notwithstanding all these discouragements many native gentlemen do serve in this branch of the service; and the men of the Irregular Cavalry Corps have always been remarkable as the most willing and contented, and, without having the servile manners of the Hindoo, the most respectful native soldiers in the army. Five hundred men of this sort in a district would be far more useful to the civil power in the case of petty local disturbances than two battalions of the line, far more useful for escort purposes, and requiring but a small share of the expensive machinery of staff, commissariat, and inspecting and supervising authorities, which swells the bulk of the military budget.

I have said that these irregular troopers will do tolerably good service without any drill or regimental system whatever,—so they will, but it is not of course intended to advocate the Pindarree or Mahratta style of warfare. It is merely mentioned to show the facility of recruiting; but it is absolutely to be remembered that no riding-school is required or would be advisable in training the irregular troopers. They ride best in their own way. But with good arms and careful attention to their drill and discipline, they would form the very class of soldiers in which

the British army, and every European army except the Russian, has always been deficient—good light cavalry, really light horsemen. They are all, or with very few exceptions, Mussulmans, and have no objection to foreign service of any description. Why did we not employ a few thousands of these men in the late war with Russia? I verily believe because, from the wretched rate at which most of the regiments are paid, we only had six or seven corps sufficiently well mounted, clothed and armed to be of any service, and they could not be spared from India. The two regiments of Scinde Horse and the four regiments of the Hyderabad Contingent, are paid fairly, not handsomely—thirty rupees a month—and can afford to keep good serviceable horses, but the ordinary pay of the irregular trooper is only twenty rupees a month, which is barely sufficient to keep him and his horse alive.

These troops ought to be augmented, better paid, and measures taken to induce the gentlemen and nobles of the country to enter the service as officers; and they would then be by far the most useful for ordinary duties in time of peace, and by far the most useful auxiliaries to a British army in time of war. They will be found brave and dashing light cavalry; and after all, light cavalry are not expected to be death-and-glory heroes, to perform Balaklava charges, or demolish Russian squares.



The natives of India are brave, and when properly handled and treated, are capable of a fine military spirit, but they never will be found equal in energy and stern determination to European soldiers. Infantry sepoy never were and never will be fit to cope with European bayonets, or to face for hours a destructive fire of artillery without wavering. In a foreign war, even say in Persia or in Egypt, we must always rely for the masses of our army on the British race. But for light cavalry I know not where we are to look except to India, and I believe that the Indian Irregular Cavalry, if properly paid and organized, would be found far superior in both men and horses—the men superior in daring and dexterity, the horses in weight, swiftness, and endurance—to the Cossacks of the Czar. Foster the Irregular Cavalry, cut down the Regular Infantry sepoy to a minimum, and above all, never allow any European officer to have a command or to have the least official intercourse with sepoy who is not well qualified, by a knowledge of their language and experience of their customs, to exercise supreme and summary authority; and let us have no more cadetships. Dam up the stream of home patronage, and let us select, from the vast superfluity of excellent material we have in the country already, mature officers fit for real command.

We have many more English officers, both civil



and military, in the country than we ought to have. Does any one suppose that twenty European officers add to the physical strength of a native corps? We see from the fate of the Bengal army how much they add to the influence and authority of Government over the men, and the same faults, in a not much mitigated form, may be seen by any observant and independent looker-on in the Madras and Bombay armies also. Let me in a few words sum up my recommendations. Only two or three selected and well-qualified officers should be placed in each native battalion, and the commandant should be supreme. General Jacob, whose pamphlets I am glad to see have not escaped notice at home, long ago enforced, with considerable clearness and point, that with a system of publicity, open *darbar*, or orderly room, and reports to superior authority, a commandant cannot be trusted with too much or too summary authority. If his reports and returns prove his incorrigible incapacity or injustice, send him back to ordinary regimental duty. In the Queen's regiments serving in India, and in the Company's artillery and European infantry, there is quite a wide enough field for selection; and officers will soon commence to qualify themselves, if prospects of command, emolument, and promotion are held out to them. For Heaven's sake don't let the twenty-five new Sikh regiments raised by Sir John Lawrence in the Punjab



be spoiled by deluging them with the broken-down officers of the Bengal infantry. I am sorry for them; I don't blame them so much as the system which had been established by four generations of Bengal officers and Bengal sepoys; but they *have* broken down with the system, and with the system they ought to disappear. With the regimental system they ought to disappear as regimental officers. A vast number of them are doing good service on the staff, in civil employ, with the irregular regiments before mentioned, and in European regiments; but as to the remainder, let them be pensioned, or made bishops, or anything else that is ornamental and harmless; but let them never again be placed in charge of men whom they never understood, never liked, and never commanded.



LETTER II.

THE MADRAS SEPOYS.

To return to Nagpore and the Madras troops : it would be the most short-sighted and narrow-minded policy for our rulers to endeavour to persuade themselves, or for them to endeavour to persuade the people of England, that the Madras sepoy's are really and truly loyal and devoted to their European masters. They are not. Their sympathies from the first rumour of the Meerut and Delhi outbreaks have been entirely with the mutineers : and in the bazaar, the mosque, and even the guard-room, there was but little concealment in the expression of those sympathies. As usual, the last persons to hear a hint of the sepoy's' opinions, hopes, and plans, were the officers of the Madras regiments ; indeed the great majority of them now profess the greatest confidence in their men, and would indignantly repudiate the possibility of their ever having been disposed to join in the rebellion. We have seen the same blind and fatal confidence in the officers of many Bengal Native regiments ; and we have seen by how much the bloody results of the mutiny have been swelled by persistence in that blind confidence, until the last moment of possible safety had passed.



But still, although one cannot excuse that want of information and insight in the commandants and higher ranks of the army, it is impossible to quarrel with the junior officers for feeling confidence in their men. We may deplore the cause of that confidence—sheer ignorance—and urge the inefficiency of such officers with such troops, but the feeling is a noble and a truly military feeling, and we cannot quarrel with it.

The Madras and Bombay armies have always been kept in a more strict state of discipline, and there has always existed a more soldier-like feeling, and a higher sense of duty among their officers, than among the officers of the Bengal army. It will be seen that I only speak comparatively. In the two minor armies the sepoys were not quite so entirely left to take care of themselves, and allowed to have their own way. In the Madras Presidency especially there was not such a profusion of staff and civil appointments open to military officers, and consequently not such a constant and universal anxiety to escape from regimental duty. The system and traditions of the Madras and Bombay armies were better; and in both there was a greater mixture of castes and races, although the proportion of actual low-caste and out-caste sepoys was much less than has been generally supposed and represented. But one-half of the Bengal army was composed of Brah-



mins and Rajpoots, who by their superior numbers and social position gave the tone to the whole corps; only two other respectable Hindoo castes, Aheers and Kayaths, were ever admitted to the ranks; and the small number of Mussulmans, drawn from the same localities with the Hindoo sepoy, had hardly any object or interest that was separate from their comrades, and no stronger inducement to remain faithful to the British Government. On the other hand, the attraction of Delhi, and their ancient monarchy, when once that became the word of action, was, of course, stronger with the Mussulmans than with the Hindoos.

But now you will ask me why the contagion of mutiny did not spread to the Madras army, why it has so slightly affected the Bombay army, and why the Irregular corps, whose system I have praised and advocated, have in so many instances followed the lead of the regiments of the line. Before touching on the general and particular, the remote and exciting, causes of the rebellion, I will endeavour to answer these questions.

And first, as to the Irregular and Local regiments. Many of them mutinied certainly, but a very large minority at least of them are doing good and active service to this day, while, with the exception of three battalions, the 21st at Peshawur, the 31st at Saugor, and the 73rd at Julpigoree, every one of the Bengal



regular corps has either mutinied or has been disarmed. And another observation must be made, that with the exception of one or two instances, the men of the mutinous Irregular corps have not attempted to murder their officers; in many cases they have treated them with marked care and consideration; and in almost every corps there has been a not inconsiderable party that have remained true to their allegiance. Every circumstance has concurred to show the superior temper and spirit of the men of Irregular corps, and the stronger influence and control of their three selected European officers, when compared with the blindness and helplessness of the numerous regimental officers of the regular corps. This is the more remarkable when we consider that the men of the Irregular regiments are drawn from exactly the same districts and exactly the same classes as the men of the line. And yet the European officers of the Irregular corps are not selected with sufficient conscientiousness and care; nor are they entrusted with sufficient independent authority; while the native officers are taken from the ranks, and promoted for the most part on the same faulty principles that we have already alluded to when speaking of the regular infantry. There is much room for improvement in the Irregular system, but its superiority has been conspicuously proved.

Six or seven battalions of the Bombay army have



been found tainted with mutiny ; two have exploded very much in the style to which we have now become accustomed, and in one officers have been murdered. Nor have the mutineers been entirely confined to the Poorbeeas sepoy of the same caste and locality as the Bengal sepoy, as was at first stated. Many of the mutineers of the 27th N. I., who killed three young officers at Kolapore, were Mahrattas and Deccanee Mussulmans. The better organization and discipline of the Bombay and Madras armies, and their differences of race and language, have had much to do with their general good behaviour, but the great cause of their salvation has been their removal from the scenes of excitement and temptation by considerable distances. The tide of rebellion has never swept before their doors ; they have never been in actual communication with the actors in the mutiny ; the contagion never actually reached them. But they were all much interested and excited by the rumours which they heard, in proportion to their vicinity to the disturbed districts, and I hesitate not to state, on information which appears to me to be quite unimpeachable, that all their sympathies and hopes were with the mutineers and rebels. The Madras and Bombay sepoy have no more affection for our race, and no more devotion to our Government, than those of Bengal. It must be remembered that I am speaking of a time of general madness



and confusion, when the ties of duty and custom are relaxed or broken, when superstition and vague dreams of glory and plunder rule the hour. Where the Bombay troops, as at Neemuch and Nusseerabad, did come partially within the circle of contagion, they were found utterly untrustworthy, and the lives of their officers hung by a thread. At Bombay, Ahmedabad, Kurrachee, Shikarpore, Kolapore, Belgaum, and Dharwar, there have been plots among the sepoys, and severe examples have been made of many of them.

At this place, Nagpore, which may be considered to have been throughout these dangerous times the advanced post of the Madras army, there were plots and conspiracies among all ranks and classes, except the very highest—the Ranees of Nagpore and their nearest relations, who kept to their old traditional policy of fidelity to the British Government. But the most powerful and dangerous class of conspirators kept themselves carefully in reserve, and watched the course of events, ready to take advantage of any favourable opportunity for action. The only plot that came to anything like maturity was one got up by some fanatical Mussulmans in the city of Nagpore, in conjunction with some native officers in the Irregular cavalry; and it was from the first a complete and dismal failure; the sepoys of the Irregular regiments themselves denounced the emissaries who



came to try and persuade them to join; very few even of the Irregular cavalry were let into the secret; and the whole affair exploded prematurely, or rather flashed in the pan; the leaders were arrested without an attempt at resistance or rescue; nine of them were hanged after a fair trial, and not a shot has been fired on either side up to the present day.

But during these days of conspiracy, the Madras sepoys at Kamptee were tampered with by influential and disaffected natives, and such answers were returned to their overtures as clearly proved what I have been enforcing, that the sympathies of the Madras sepoys were entirely with the insurrectionary movement, and that if they had got a tempting opportunity they would have joined in it. They only wanted a beginning to be made, and a rallying-point of some sort, a standard either of a Rājā, or a pretender, or of the Mussulman faith, to be exhibited, for them to take their part against the Feringhees. But they never got the steam up here; and a second excitement is not easily to be produced after a dismal and ignominious failure.

All honour and credit to the Madras troops who have behaved so well during a season of great difficulty and danger! all honour to their officers, for the excellent state of discipline in which those troops have been kept for many years! but do not let us fall into dreams of fancied security regarding them.



They are not to be trusted ; they have not the contented or loyal spirit that ought to be desired and might be obtained in the native troops. Had one or two of their battalions mutinied in the midst of the Delhi excitement, had one brigade gone wrong, the contagion would have spread throughout the army like wildfire, as it did through the Bengal army ; for the Madras troops are as much attached and held together by their " bhye bund," or brotherhood, as the Bengal army is. And one-third of the Madras infantry and the whole of the cavalry are Mahomedan. The Bengal army was a Brahmin army ; in the same sense and degree the Madras army is Musulman, that is to say, the Mahomedans take the lead and give the general tone to the army. We must never forget the mutiny at Vellore, or suppose that the Madras men are of a different clay from those of Bengal. Had the brigade at Nagpore gone wrong, the sepoy at Hyderabad could not have remained quiet, the Nizam could not have resisted the impulse, or would have been struck down and replaced by one of his brothers, the whole Deccan would have been in a blaze, Poona, Sattara, Kolapore, the Carnatic, would have sent forth hordes of rebels and mutineers. We have escaped from a terrible, incalculable aggravation and extension of the shock our empire has received. Nagpore was for two months the most critical point in India.



During June and July, the subordination of the Madras and Bombay armies, and the peace of the Deccan and of the Carnatic, were almost entirely dependent on the tranquillity of Nagpore, Hyderabad, and Poonah. The two former cities were more to be suspected and feared than the latter, but any one of the three would in all probability have carried away the other two in resistance and war to the knife against the British power. It would not have mattered in which city the outbreak first took place, they would have mutually reacted on one another; and the defection of any of the troops at one of these places would have been the signal for the dissolution of the Madras and Bombay armies.

Remember that I have been speaking of the Madras army during a period of general excitement and madness. That time has passed by; and the Madrâsees are just as trustworthy now as they ever were. I don't doubt that they will attack the Bengal mutineers with as much determination as they would any other enemy of the Government. They have no great love for the haughty Brahmins and Rajpoots of the north; and now that the Delhi delusion has been dissipated, they have begun to regain their old faith in the overwhelming power of their British masters. But the Bengal sepoy's served us faithfully for a hundred years, and I doubt not, were they organized on exactly the old footing,



they would serve us faithfully for many years more. But it would be utter insanity to try them. The fact is that our sepoy army was on much too large a scale, and organized on a faulty and degrading plan. We want a large reduction and a sweeping reform.*

* Besides minor mutinies about pay, marches, and other alleged grievances, of which there have been many, there have been no less than three great military conspiracies widely spread in the Madras army, with political aims, and having as the leading feature of the plan the extermination of all the Europeans in India. The first was the mutiny of Vellore in 1806; the second took place at Nagpore in 1820; and the third at Bangalore, the head quarters of the Mysore division, in 1832. The two last affairs appear to have been hushed up at the time as much as possible. Four of the ringleaders in the Bangalore business were blown from guns, and two shot.



LETTER III.

THE INSURRECTION OF 1857.

THE Indian insurrection of 1857 was no mere pretorian rebellion; and it was only in a very confined sense the result of a deeply-laid conspiracy. It was very much of a national uprising, and could not, by any amount of precautions, have been postponed many years. Nothing but a course of reparation and restoration can prevent the recurrence of a similar attempt at a war of extermination against us.

Scindiah, Holkar, and the Rajah of Rewah, the three most powerful and influential princes within reach of the first vibrations of revolt, have all found a large party of their relations, nobles, officers, soldiers, and subjects in general, intent upon making common cause with the rebels—so intent that they have in all three States not hesitated to throw off their allegiance to their own sovereigns. At Hyderabad, the firmness and vigilance of Salar Jung, the Minister of the Nizam, with difficulty prevented a general Mahomedan rising. At Jhansi, one of Lord Dalhousie's annexations, the most terrible massacre of all, with the exception of that at Cawnpore, took place, and the district still forms a rallying place for rebels. At Sattara, another of his



annexations, there was a deeply laid plot, which was fortunately discovered in time, baffled by Lord Elphinstone's prompt despatch of European troops to the spot, and punished by seventeen executions. At Nagpore, another and perhaps the most unjustifiable and reckless of all Lord Dalhousie's annexations, there were plottings enough, but owing to the wisdom and prudence of a venerable lady, H. H. the Banka Bae, the widow of Rughojee the Second, who fought against us at Assaye and Argaum, no important conspiracy was brought to maturity. The Mahratta chieftains at Nagpore without her countenance would not attempt a rising; and the only people who endeavoured to imitate at Nagpore the deeds of Meerut and Delhi were an obscure party of Mussulman fanatics, whose plans were frustrated by the local authorities, without a shot being fired or any resistance offered. Nine executions terminated the troubles at Nagpore, which never actually agitated the surface of the native population. In the annexation of Oude, the largest and richest of Lord Dalhousie's annexations, the birth-place of nearly one-half of the late Bengal army, may be found the climax of the disgust, distrust, and spite which, increasing throughout India for the last twenty-five years, at last exploded in the rebellion of 1857. In Oude we have hitherto met with stout resistance, and now that so many of the large zemindars in

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that province are "up," it will not be settled again without considerable expenditure of blood and treasure.

We must be very careful not to underestimate the magnitude and peril of the crisis through which we have just passed. A partially successful rising at Nagpore, the murder of the Commissioner and the few English officers residing near that city, the plunder of the treasury and arsenal by the Mussulman fanatics, would have forced the more influential and powerful Mahratta and Brahmin chieftains to take possession of the movement, and the Ranees could not, in all probability, have resisted any longer. A little more boldness and determination, an hour or two more to perfect their preparations, would have easily given the Mahomedan conspirators at Nagpore this partial success. There was nothing to oppose them at Seetabuldee, the residence of the Commissioner and his staff. And after this auspicious beginning, a Mahratta cavalcade, a few flags, a Rajah or a Ranee in the saddle, distributing money and gold ornaments, would, in the *month of June*, have terribly tried and shaken the Madras sepoy; and the effect of the news on the immense and turbulent population of Hyderabad would probably have been decisive. The name of the Banka Bacc of Nagpore is well known; and the news of any one of the Ranees, *a woman*, being in the field would



have roused the whole Deccan. The Nizam and his Minister, Salar Jung, if they had endeavoured to stem the tide, would have been swept away, and some other member of the family raised to the throne. Poonah and Sattara, the petty Rajahs and Sirdars of the Deccan, Khandeish and Guzerat, would have risen at a signal from either Nagpore or Hyderabad. Kurnool and Cuddapah, two Madras districts containing numbers of warlike Pathan Mahomedans, would have followed the example of Hyderabad; Mysore, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, the Moplahs of Malabar, the Mahomedans of Madras itself, almost entirely denuded of European troops, would have joined in the war of extermination; and with a mutinous and murderous Madras army, what resistance could have been offered by the English? No European fugitive would have had a resting-place for the sole of his foot in any part of India, except perhaps in the three great Presidency towns. There would have been a series of Cabul and Cawnpore massacres throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula. It would have been the beginning of the end, so far as our existing power in India is concerned: we should have had to begin again entirely. Our enemies would have had time and space to organize and establish themselves, and no native State could much longer have pretended to uphold our cause. We should no longer have been able to



speak of rebels or mutineers, but should have had to enter India ourselves as foreign invaders.

These possibilities we have escaped for this time ; we have never lost the prestige, the awe, the credit, which belong to an established and recognised Government. Except at Delhi and at Lucknow the rebels have never succeeded in getting even the form and semblance of a national and sovereign leader. Nana Sahib at Cawnpore was almost a foreigner ; at Poonah he would have been formidable. In Oude, the most recently annexed, and notoriously an unquiet province, the great zemindars and nobles appear to be about equally divided into a hostile and a neutral party. Several of them have protected fugitive officers, and at least one or two are giving us active assistance. In short, we have never lost our hold on the conservative interests of the country.

And before quitting this part of our subject we must glance at the Punjab, and give some notion of the causes which have not only kept that province, formerly a great source of danger and anxiety, quiet, but have also enabled us to make it the basis of our operations at Delhi, and to draw from it all our supplies of men, money, and stores of every description. This seems to form an exception and answer to our suggested and implied reference to annexation, as one cause of our unpopularity and of our weakness. We shall come to that question shortly, but in the



meantime we must not overrate the inferences in favour of annexation to be drawn from the peculiar case of the Punjab. In the first place it must be remembered that if we had not annexed it, we should not have had to occupy it; and that we have now seven or eight thousand Europeans locked up in the Punjab, who would otherwise have been placed in the stations of our old frontier, and available for service at Delhi, or in Oude. In the next place, may we not assume that, if after the war of 1849 we had retained the innocent Dhuleep Sing on the throne, merely exacting from the Punjab Government payment of the expenses of the war, and of such further occupation as might have been necessary, we should in our time of need have found him as faithful and earnest an ally as his neighbour, Goolab Sing of Cashmere? And lastly, I am quite willing to allow, and this is a most important point in the inquiry, that this was the *most* just and reasonable of our recent annexations, and has not excited so much objection or reprobation among the reflecting and influential class of natives as several others.

And while the Sikhs are traditionally hostile to the natives of Hindostan, and to the Mussulman King of Delhi, whose ancestors were the unrelenting persecutors of their earliest and most revered Gooroos, or prophets, they have learned, ever since the last war, to hate still more the Bengal sepoy, who



assumed the airs of conquerors, and whose countrymen monopolized the majority of the best military, civil, and police appointments available to natives. The Sikhs were, therefore, not prepared to sympathize or make common cause with the Hindostanees, or to fight for the Great Mogul; and in the defection of the Bengal sepoy, which was most promptly and wisely met by Sir John Lawrence's invitation to the Sikhs to enlist, they naturally saw their own opportunity to gain the confidence and favour of the ruling power, and to supplant the haughty Hindostanee interlopers. But the Sikhs only form a very small portion of the population of the Punjab; they number, perhaps, 500,000, or about a twentieth of the whole. In India, south of the Sutlej, the Mahomedans, as compared with the Hindoos, are supposed to be about one in ten at the most; in the Punjab, on the contrary, they form the majority of the population, certainly more than the half, perhaps two-thirds. Now, under the Sikh domination, as perfected by Runjeet Sing, the Mussulman religion was subjected to severe restrictions and frequent persecution. The Mahomedans were not allowed to make proselytes, while every encouragement was offered to the young and ambitious among them to submit to Sikh initiation. The cry to prayers of the Muezzin was not permitted to be heard in any city, town, or village; and the celebrated Jumma



Musjid, the most ancient and splendid mosque in Lahore, was converted by Runjeet Sing into an arsenal. This mosque, immediately after the inauguration of British rule, was, after being put in thorough repair and order, handed over to the charge of the principal Mussulman Moollahs of Lahore, to be restored to its original purpose of religious worship. The Punjabee Mahomedans had, therefore, good reason to prefer our rule to that of Runjeet Sing and his successors. And great numbers of them serve in the so-called Sikh regiments. Ever since the annexation, also, the Punjab was Lord Dalhousie's particular hobby and pet province; the best men were selected for its administration, money for local improvements was freely granted, and it has been liberally and considerately governed. Large remissions of land revenue have been made, transit duties entirely abolished, and even the wild and predatory tribes on the north and north-western frontier have learned to appreciate the advantages of free commerce and honest payments. I think that I have shown sufficiently that the Punjab cannot be cited as a case which tells either for or against annexation; and that I have also explained how it is that the population in general in that province is better disposed towards our rule than that of perhaps any other part of India, except Bengal Proper. Do not let us run into the other extreme, and imagine



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that we may trust them in any numbers, and under any temptation, with the use of our most formidable engines of war; and above all, now that we have got twenty or thirty thousand of them in our service, do not let us deluge them and disgust them with a constant succession of boys from England, as we have our old-fashioned sepoy regiments, with a result that ought now to be evident enough.



LETTER IV.

STABILITY OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

LET us now try to estimate what have been the great sources of aid and security which have enabled the Government of India for this time to ride through this terrible storm, and which promise to carry it into port with triumph and with honour. The natural advantage of position and authority enjoyed by every established government, the special reputation of our arts and arms, the Conservative instincts of the princes, the landholders, and the wealthy men of the country—these formed what may be called the statics of our security. Let us endeavour also to sum up the dynamics.

The first place, due to the indispensable and visible sign and symbol and active instrument of our power, must be given to our brave captains and soldiers, to those scanty and gallant bands who, under Neill and Havelock, Nicholson and Vincent Eyre, fighting as they did against overwhelming numbers of disciplined sepoy, provided with guns, and trained and armed as themselves, have done more to prove the invincible and irresistible superiority of the British soldier's daring and energy than have all our previous most brilliant Indian campaigns. How



sick have I become of that hackneyed phrase, "India was won by the sword, and must be kept by the sword;" untrue, if it means that all our possessions and power in India were gained or are retained by mere force of arms; untrue, if it means that we ever can govern India by garrisons, or maintain our empire and influence by any conceivable military strength alone, regardless of the rights, and feelings, and social customs, and good opinion of the people; and yet how I wish that I could persuade our rulers of the truth of this phrase in a certain sense, that I could instil that truth into their minds, and make it the basis of their reformed institutions! That India must be kept by the sword, that we must trust to the sword, that in the British sword lies our real strength; that is to say, that our only real indubitable reserve and foundation of *material physical* strength does indeed consist in our force of European troops, and does in no degree consist in a shoal of beer-drinking and billiard-playing ensigns and lieutenants, or in any number of meddling ignoramuses pretending to work in any department, even though they belong to the higher ranks of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The true strength and integrity of our empire must depend on our retaining, and energizing, and consolidating our general influence and command over the good opinion and good will of the people of



India; in our spreading and confirming by wise and just government a firm belief in the beneficial effect of our supremacy—a conviction that India cannot do without us. All that has been accomplished in this direction is due to those comparatively few earnest and well-qualified Englishmen who have been and are placed in positions where useful action is possible, and where real responsibility can be felt. The great crowd of young Englishmen, both in the civil and military services, whom patronage sends to India to be provided for in annually increasing numbers, serve but to make the English name cheap, and common, and contemptible among all classes of natives. In one word, our physical strength is to be found in our European troops; our moral strength, in our qualified and earnest European officers. For all positions of command or superintendence over natives, or of administrative authority, English officers must be selected who are apt, willing, and qualified. There will always be a sufficient field for selection. Let the Government send out more doctors and more engineers, and let the public send out more missionaries and more schoolmasters—but no more ensigns, no more “writers,” whether they be the product of Haileybury or of open competition, if you please.

And this brings us to the second dynamical source of our security and success during this period of trial



—the active services of bold and able men, both European and native, in the administration and pacification of districts, and in preserving our relations with the native States. Of Sir John Lawrence's invaluable exertions, and those of the noble body of men by whom he is supported in the Punjab, I need say nothing here; they will not escape notice or fail to be duly appreciated in England. For four months the force before Delhi literally existed on Sir John Lawrence's superhuman efforts to supply them with money, provisions, and military stores, and to reinforce them with trustworthy men. Without these they must have raised the siege after the first month. Mr. Gubbins, at Benares, with rare judgment and firmness upheld the honour and authority of Government during a period of great excitement. Many more might be mentioned, on whose individual skill, prudence, and intrepidity the safety of not only their own but of all the adjoining districts depended. But all of these able public servants, Sir John Lawrence, Colonel Edwardes at our frontier station of Peshawur, the brave defenders of Lucknow, Major Davidson at Hyderabad, would acknowledge how much they were indebted to the information and the intelligent advice derived from loyal and devoted natives, both servants of the Government and persons of independent fortune. What could Mr. Gubbins



have done at Benares without Rajah Deo Narrain and Sirdar Soorut Sing? What could Mr. Robert Ellis (a name that will be well known in England some day) have done at Nagpore without the vigilance and foresight of Sheik Tuffuzzool Hoossain Khan? * Let these cases be well marked and understood. Wherever the contrary course has been pursued, failure has been universal. Of all our political, or, as you would more properly call them, diplomatic officers, the most remarkable and honourable part has undoubtedly been played by young Willoughby Osborne, who maintained himself at Rewah in Bundelcund, although the Rajah repeatedly warned him that he could not be answerable for his life, but who with indomitable pluck and perseverance kept the Rajah in the right path, and gradually bent the rebellious nobles, and mutinous troops to his will, and is now in company with the Rajah

* This noble old soldier, a pensioned Captain Commandant of the late Rajah's Cavalry, was the life and soul of the Nagpore counsels; his experience of the character and motives of action of his countrymen, his strong good sense and high courage, were incessantly conspicuous during the three months of greatest anxiety and difficulty in 1857. And from the first hint of danger his house became a rallying place for all the well-disposed and peaceably inclined, and from it constantly emanated good advice, warnings, and encouragement, by word and by letter, to persons of all conditions under his influence, who, on account of the antiquity and official rank of his family and his own personal reputation, were very numerous in the province.



leading them into the field in aid of our forces. He did not desert his post just at the very time when its retention was most important, but kept close to the Rajah, and warned him that he would be held personally responsible for the safety of our Government's representative. Osborne is a lieutenant in the 24th Madras N. I., and has only served eight years in India. Major Davidson, the Resident at Hyderabad, was begged by several native noblemen in the city to go to Secunderabad, the military cantonment, only four miles from the Residency, as a place of greater security; but he replied, that he was attached to the Residency by many old associations, and had a particular fancy to be buried in the garden. It is extremely probable that this advice was not really given to him with friendly intentions, but to try and create a panic, which might spread among the Madras troops. A few days afterwards the Residency was attacked at night by some hundreds of Rôhillas, no doubt as a feeler to see how the Madras sepoy's would behave, but they were met by a heavy fire from the native horse artillery and infantry, and easily repulsed; and the vigorous measures instituted by Salar Jung, the Nizam's minister, prevented any second attempt.



LETTER V.

THE POLICY OF ANNEXATION.

WE have now taken a hasty survey of the real nature of the crisis through which we have passed, and I have pointed out that the aim and object of the rebels was a war of extermination, and that the attainment of that aim was far from being so chimerical or so impossible as I fear some people will now try to persuade us. Are we again to be exposed to such a danger? The surest way to guard against it is to estimate it correctly, not to underrate and not to exaggerate it. We have also endeavoured to calculate the forces which have enabled us to overcome and subdue the danger for this time; and if my views are accepted, an impression will have been produced that we should watch closely and foster the conservative interests of the country, and strive to obtain the highest talent and qualifications for its administration, especially encouraging the employment of natives, and steadily opposing the reckless intrusion from the mere lust of patronage of young Europeans into posts of authority and emolument without any special training or proved aptitude, and to the exclusion of well qualified natives.

And now we come at last by a natural transition to the point which I promised to elucidate—the



causes of the very general dislike to our rule and distrust of our intentions, which have for years been appraent to all who have succeeded in gaining the confidence and eliciting the undisguised sentiments of the better educated natives of India, the causes which have led to the general disaffection throughout India, of which the mutiny of the sepoy, and the rebellion of a vast area to the north of the Nerbudda, may be considered as merely premonitory and diagnostic symptoms.

This general disaffection throughout India has been rapidly increasing in bitterness and restlessness ever since Lord Dalhousie assumed the reins of Government at Calcutta in January, 1848. Where general disaffection and distrust prevail, the mere ostensible pretext or provocative to actual conflict is never long wanting. Anything will cause an excitement; anything will serve as a cry; anything will be caught at and exhibited by the designing leaders, and accepted by the angry multitude as the crowning injury and insult, the last intolerable infliction, which must be opposed and resisted, or endured for ever. Greased cartridges will do, fetters for refusing them will do, modern-antique prophecies will do, anything will do for an exciting cause, when discontent, suspicion, and credulity reign. What excuse was there for the attack on the Tuileries in August, or the prison massacres in September, 1792?



Where an immense population is subjected to a foreign and alien race, and especially where the natives and the conquerors are of different colours, there must exist some amount of repugnance and heartburning; and nothing but the most scrupulous respect for ancient rights, and a thoroughly efficient administration on the part of the dominant race, can overcome the natural aversion to a foreign yoke, and secure permanent or even long-continued submission and peace. From want of sympathy with the natives, and our pride of superiority, and the ever-increasing lust of patronage, we have excluded the natives from all share and interest in the Government, and from almost all posts of dignity and high emolument; and we have done nothing to initiate that human fellowship between the races, without which our mission in the East must for ever remain dark and barren. It has gradually come to pass that there is *no* human relation between the English and the natives of India, neither that of master and slave, nor that of patron and client, nor until 1857 even that of open foes; but a hard misunderstanding and mutual distrust subsist, which but a few individuals on either side can break through. And within the last twenty years, but more particularly within the last ten years, from the extension of our territory, and the consequent employment in greater numbers of young and inexperienced men, the inefficiency, oppression,

and corruption of our judicial and magisterial establishments have been aggravated, and in some districts have become intolerable. And within the same period we have gradually shown more and more disregard for ancient rights, less and less consideration for the most legitimate and cherished feelings and predilections of the best-instructed and most influential classes of the natives. It was not always so ; we did not gain our immense possessions and power in India by such means. We cannot keep them so.

While the founders of our Indian Empire were maintaining and strengthening a precarious position, controlling and conciliating allies, and contending with powerful enemies, whom they could not but respect and admire in some degree, the English in India continued to place a high value on the good will and good opinion of the natives. While they were evoking peace and order out of a chaos of conflicting interests, they learned at every step to appreciate both the value of native tact in negotiation, and the powerful influence of our own reputation for honour and fair dealing. And as in all times of conquest, crisis, and real difficulty the work was done by a few heroes and statesmen, our most celebrated tasks of the pacification, settlement, and organization of large provinces were effected by one or two able and experienced English officers in each



province, by means of some special native agency and the existing local authorities. These able and experienced men—first-rate, second-rate, or third-rate soldiers or administrators—never make themselves offensive to the natives, never despise the inhabitants of the country, or think lightly of their ancient rights, privileges, customs, or prejudices. In fact, they understand the natives, and can make themselves understood and respected by them. Search the works, the official writings, and the official acts, of such men as Lord Metcalfe, Sir Thomas Munro, Frederick John Shore, Sir John Malcolm, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Sir Henry Russell, General Low, and Sir Robert Hamilton, for the proof of these allegations. But as our supremacy became every day more surely established and acknowledged, the immediate obvious necessity for reliance on native agency rapidly diminished, until the stream of home patronage, which grows with what it feeds upon, has at length filled the whole country with English gentlemen to be provided for, and with apparent functions to be performed. The mass of European idlers and nonentities in the civil and military services don't certainly add to the physical strength of England in India, while they detract from her moral strength, lower the native ideal standard of English ability and honour, and introduce an element of insolence, contempt, and tyranny, which is most



dangerous to our power, and derogatory to our national reputation. The same great vice pervades our entire system; an unnatural and degrading rule of exclusion is manifest in all our establishments; appointments for Englishmen are multiplied; and young Englishmen without any peculiar qualifications are placed in minor positions, the duties of which could be fulfilled in a much more efficient manner by natives, with the great advantage of their improvement in knowledge, in self-respect, and in attachment to British interests.

But our reputation has suffered of late years, by derelictions in a still more fatal direction. The Duke of Wellington made a well-known declaration in 1802: "I would rather sacrifice Gwalior, or any frontier, ten times over, in order to preserve our character for scrupulous good faith." We have *not* preserved our character for good faith. Within the last twelve years especially, we have made several summary extinctions of sovereignties and annexations of territory, most doubtful in their legality according to the strict letter of treaties and of the law of nations, and in their obvious spirit and tendency manifestly significant of our decreasing regard for the honour and interests of our native allies. Of course each of the cases alluded to must be judged upon its own merits; but that a great change has come over the spirit of our policy, since all powerful



opponents have disappeared from the scene, will be seen from a very cursory reference to historical facts. And it cannot be doubted that this change has spread great terror and dissatisfaction among all the classes interested in the stability of the native principalities.

During the stormy and busy period from 1800 to 1820, we respected all existing rights, rewarded liberally our own allies, and showed the fullest consideration for the dignity of our conquered enemies and the interests of their adherents.

When Tippoo Sultan's monarchy fell with Sérin-gapatam, we took a third of the conquered dominions as our share, we made a good bargain with the Nizam for his third of the territory, but we erected the remainder, which was in fact nearly the whole of the original Mysore country, into a principality for the representative of the ancient Rajahs; and we agreed with the Nizam* to make a handsome and becoming provision for Tippoo's large family. But of late years, although an ample share of land, yielding upwards of seven lakhs of rupees per annum, was conceded to us by the Nizam for this express purpose, the Supreme Government and the Home authorities have made several plans for the gradual reduction and ultimate extinction of the allowances

* By the Partition Treaty of Mysore in 1799.



to Tippoo's descendants; and in a despatch on this subject from the Court of Directors, which was published in all the newspapers about a year ago, as if calculated to gain universal approval, it was plainly stated that the Mysore family must be prepared to "mingle with the people," that the stipends would all be gradually diminished, and after a certain number of lives, would be entirely withdrawn. Of the vicious nature of the system of hereditary stipends, so burdensome to the State, and so demoralizing to the recipient, there can be no question; it is most objectionable in principle and in practice. But why has the opportunity in this case, as in many others, been lost of introducing that powerful conservative element, private property in land? Thirty or forty years after Tippoo's death, and at a distance of fifteen hundred miles from Mysore, there could have been no necessity for keeping the princes, brought up from childhood under our tuition, in custody or in surveillance. In the possession of landed estates, which might once for all have been conferred on the head of the family or of the several branches, the princes would have been attached to a safe locality, and established in an honourable and useful position, instead of being condemned to an idle and discontented existence in Calcutta. The family of Tippoo appears to be entitled to a permanent provision in some shape or other, by every dictate of compassion.



and justice, for, as before mentioned, our Government accepted of a valuable consideration from its allies for the express purpose of undertaking this charge. Any plan for attenuating these stipends at each succession, and for ultimately extinguishing them, would be most iniquitous; and the recommendation that the princes should learn to "mingle with the people," sounds to the native ear like a cruel mockery. Nor is this so unreasonable. Do we in Europe expect the scions of a Royal line, however ephemeral its power may have been—a Murat, or a Beauharnais—to "mingle with the people?" Then is it to be supposed that in a country like India, in a very inferior state of civilization, such a recommendation will be received with complacency or recognised as considerate and honest advice? I do not doubt the intentions of the upright Home Government, but I do consider this case as one illustration of the change induced in our political views by forty years of supremacy, and of the scanty sympathy which the illustrious and unfortunate princes and nobles of India have received of late years.

Between 1800 and 1819, when the great general pacification of India took place, we were not ashamed to make compromises and concessions even in the midst of our greatest triumphs. After driving the most active and enterprising of the Mahratta chief-



tains, Holkar, out of every part of his dominions into the Punjab, where his army might have been completely destroyed with ease, we concluded peace with him in 1805, on moderate terms. This State having again become hostile in 1817, and its military power having been destroyed at the battle of Mahidpore, a treaty of peace was made with Mulhar Rao Holkar, restoring him his capital and the greater part of his territories, and leaving his honour and his independence undiminished. Ameer Khan of Tonk, a soldier of fortune and partisan of Holkar, with no hereditary pretensions or powerful connexions, whom we might have crushed, or set aside and pensioned, without exciting any extensive ill-feeling, was confirmed and secured in all his recently acquired possessions, yielding upwards of fifteen lakhs of rupees per annum, and some districts added as a mark of the good-will of the Honourable Company. By numerous similar settlements, evincing a generous and friendly consideration both for ancient rights and for the new interests which had sprung up on the ruins of the Mogul Empire, much influence was gained by the Company and much opposition disarmed.

When the last of the Peishwas, after the short war brought on by his own unexampled treachery, surrendered himself to Sir John Malcolm, a course was adopted, to spare, as much as possible, the pride of



the Mahrattas, and to leave the Sirdars of the Deccan a national centre for the preservation of their old customs and former dignity. A part of the immense territories lately under the sway of the Peishwas was erected into an independent principality for the Rajah of Sattara, the representative head of the Mahratta Empire. Lord Dalhousie took advantage of the failure of a direct heir, refused to acknowledge the Hindoo law of adoption, and extinguished this small but influential and friendly sovereignty. When Rajah Appah Sahib of Nagpore, having forfeited all claim to further forbearance by his continued hostile intrigues against our power, was deposed, the grandson of Rughojee Bhonsla the Second, who fought against us at Assaye and Argaum, was placed on the Musnud of Nagpore, and thus all existing interests in that quarter were conciliated. On the death of this Rajah, our faithful and submissive ally, Lord Dalhousie, declined to recognise his grand-nephew and heir, and in total defiance of fact and law declared the Bhonsla family to be extinct. In all our treaties of peace we exacted ample indemnity for our war expenses, accessions of revenue to support our increased establishments, and guarantees for our future undivided supremacy; but, at the same time, the prudent and far-seeing policy was observed, of not driving the conquered princes and nobles of India to despair by

utter confiscation, or by such excessive reduction of their revenues as would render impossible the support of their accustomed and decent state, and of their relations and hereditary vassals, and impair the efficiency of their administrations. The native principalities were then regarded as forming a most valuable place of refuge for ambitious and warlike characters, and for those numerous families of hereditary official reputation, who, under our system of rule, must inevitably have sunk into obscurity, poverty, and discontent—have become either beggars or conspirators.

“I am decidedly of opinion,” said Sir John Malcolm, “that the tranquillity, not to say security, of our power will be hazarded in proportion as the territories of native princes and chiefs fall under our direct rule.” “It appears to me,” said Mountstuart Elphinstone, “to be our interest, as well as our duty, to use every means to preserve the allied Governments. The period of our downfall in India will probably be hastened by every increase of our territory and subjects.” “I consider the extinction of a native State,” said Sir Henry Russell, “as a nail driven into our own coffin.”

What a contrast to the counsel of these veteran Indian administrators and statesmen was the bold declaration of Lord Dalhousie, after one year's experience in the office of Governor-General:—“I take



this fitting opportunity of recording my strong and deliberate opinion, that in the exercise of a wise and sound policy the British Government is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue, as may from time to time present themselves." This is not the place to discuss the justice of the annexation of the Punjab, Satara, Jhansi, Nagpore, and Oude, which all took place under Lord Dalhousie's tenure of office : we are concerned at present only with the *policy* of such acquisitions, with the effect thereby produced on the public opinion of India, and in particular with the share which these repeated "acquisitions of territory and revenue" have had in kindling the terrific conflagration of 1857.

So long as we continued to be still only one of the powers of India, and were engaged in subduing fierce enemies, and conquering provinces, alliances with the native princes were sought, and we certainly drew our full share of advantages from such as we formed. For years we were celebrated as faithful and liberal friends, our generous restorations of the Mysore and Sattara Rajahs gained us golden opinions from all sorts of people ; our generous leniency after the treachery of Appah Sahib, the Rajah of Nagpore, in 1817, in placing another member of the family on the Musnud, was a strong proof of our moderation and regard for the illustrious families of the country. But with the dis-



appearance of the last vestige of an opposing power our moderation began to disappear; the lust of patronage, the swelling of our establishments, led to financial difficulties, and the imprudent and most unjust expedition to Afghanistan in 1839 was the commencement of a series of annual deficiencies, which appear to have stimulated our rulers to annexation, and to the more rapid and sweeping resumption of estates as a means of restoring a financial equilibrium. Lord Ellenborough's equitable and considerate settlement of the Gwalior State after the Maharajpore campaign, had a most reassuring effect throughout India; but Lord Dalhousie carried the policy of annexation and resumption beyond all precedent, and enforced it against our most faithful and submissive allies. That this plan has signally and deplorably failed must be now sufficiently apparent. That it has led to a widely spread discontent among the most influential classes, whose ideas descend and penetrate through every rank of Indian society, is equally certain. In every mosque, in every bazaar, in every assemblage of the people, during the last ten years, loud and bitter have been the denunciations of the bad faith of our Government. Sattara, Nagpore, and Oudh have been the greatest sources of discontent.



LETTER VI.

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF ANNEXATION.

THE extensive distress and ruin among the most cultivated and influential classes of Indian society, the rage, mortification, and consternation produced by these repeated annexations, can neither be denied nor doubted by any one who has seen anything of life in India. Lord Dalhousie and his supporters have said, and will say again, that they never expected that the extension of British rule would be acceptable to the parasites of a Native Court, who fatten on its profusion and its corruption; and the claims of the native military and official aristocracy to a solid and permanent establishment under our revolutionary arrangements are usually dismissed, if they are ever taken into consideration at all, with a rhetorical and objurgatory tirade, of which the political economy is as shortsighted and unsound as the language is flippant and unfeeling. A life tenure of their emoluments to sinecurists is generally considered as a remarkably liberal settlement; while the titles to landed estates and to hereditary charges on the revenue are strictly and unrelentingly sifted. All prospects of employment in posts of high distinction and emolument are closed. All places



of authority are filled by English officers, many of whom (especially within the last ten years, from the increasing numbers required) are ignorant, inexperienced, and eminently unconciliatory in their manners. Our Government takes all that it can, resumes landed estates and allowances of money, whenever it can find a plausible excuse, even from the occasional arbitrary acts of the native princes, to do so; but grants nothing, gives nothing; so that the constant and certain tendency of our rule hitherto has been to level all social inequalities, till none are left between the dominant English and the peasantry, but a purely official class of upstart ministerial officers, trained in our courts, badly paid and corrupt, who in the eyes of the natives represent the character and spirit of our Government, and in the eyes of our Government represent the character and spirit of the natives in general. For there are comparatively few of the English officials in India who have any intercourse with any class of the natives except their own subordinates and the suitors in their courts and offices, and they form their opinion of the native character from what they hear and see.

A native sovereign, with his locally recruited army and personal attendants, his religious, national, and family ceremonies and processions, and progresses through the country, is a bountiful source of hereditary employment, of pride, amusement, and excite-



ment to all ranks and classes. All this ceases on an annexation, all public pomp, state, and general amusement cease, the sting and vivifying charm of life is gone, everything is doomed to settle down to a dead, dull, and uniform level. Too little thought has been given to this consequence of our interference; we have sneered and mocked at the notion of natives feeling loyalty and affection for their ancient chieftains, though in every page of history, and in every event of the present day, we may see that these sentiments have a most powerful influence, more powerful, perhaps, among Oriental nations than they ever lead among those of Europe. And, in a certain phase of civilization, in a certain stage of social development, these sentiments are powers which a wise Government should know how to evoke and how to wield. We have done nothing to encourage feelings of loyalty and devotion for our Queen or for our Government; we have grossly outraged those feelings by our treatment of friendly princes and their families, and we now see the results in the rebellion and attempted war of extermination of 1857.

Though despotic, the native Governments of India are truly patriarchal; they discourage, more or less, the accumulation of private property—at least among the personal followers of the sovereign—whose traditional policy it is to have even the most powerful



LETTERS FROM NAGPORE.

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of his nobles dependent on him, and to retain complete control over their fortunes. For these reasons the native monarch, from immemorial custom, is heir-general to all his own relations, ministers, and courtiers; but, on the other hand, he never fails to provide for the families of his deceased servants, with a liberality proportionate to the amount of the realization from their estates or hoarded wealth, while all the great civil offices and military commands are filled from these favoured classes, who form, in fact, the native aristocracy. The native monarchs, doubtless, adopted this plan from jealousy of their nobles becoming too powerful, and for the same reason they frequently preferred to provide for their relations and courtiers by sinecure offices, annual money allowances, and occasional presents, to granting them jagheers or landed estates. We cannot, of course, continue this barbarous, irregular patriarchal system, but hitherto we have not sufficiently, in fact not at all, recognised the obligations imposed on us by its existence from time immemorial. In consequence of this system, an aristocracy has grown up, which we find in possession of all the power, wealth, and privileges of the annexed country, dependent on the will and favour of an absolute monarch, it is true, but protected by ancient custom, and by that universal public opinion, against which even an absolute monarch can seldom offend with impunity.



Private accumulations have been discouraged, and generally appropriated at each succession, but the right to a perpetual provision for the family, and to the recognition of their dignity and rank, has ever been held sacred. Our rule works a complete revolution in their position and prospects, effectually closing to them their former career in the public service, and allowing to the stipendiary and sinecurist merely his actual emoluments for life, or, as "a special case," for two or more lives, so that ruin and degradation are but postponed for a generation or two. Now, it appears to me, that the very fact of the obstacles offered to the accumulation of private property, serves to render the right to a perpetually hereditary stipend or sinecure much more powerful and indefeasible than it can ever be under a constitutional Government. And yet, in England, we have always given ample, frequently excessive, compensation on the abolition of sinecure offices and hereditary pensions. In India we have, as yet, offered no compensation to the higher classes, the most reflecting and most influential of the population, for the loss of rank, power, and wealth, for the utter ruin and desolation, in many cases, which the introduction of our system of Government brings upon them. Had we recognised the vested rights of all hereditary sinecurists and stipendiaries to a permanent provision under our rule, had we commuted their



stipends and charges on the revenue, according to some equitable scale, into *landed estates* held by a well-secured title, we should have introduced an element of harmony and conservatism into our provinces, instead of degrading and exasperating the most hopeful and advanced classes of the nation, and converting them into beggars and conspirators.

The annals of one such family would form a curious and painful social picture. We may conceive an old Sooba, Bukshee or Dewan carrying the wrecks of his fortune to some large city. He receives a pension from the British Government, which ceases at his death, or the half of which is continued to his son, "as a special case, not to be drawn into a precedent." For two or three generations their descendants cluster together and preserve a shadow of their former position in gradually increasing poverty and discontent. They pass their lives in killing time; they are ignorant, extravagant, and licentious; they are overwhelmed with mortgagers, usurers, and religious knaves. These *may* be proofs (they have often been adduced as such) of the innate and ineradicable baseness and frivolity and depravity of the Hindoo and Mussulman races; but perhaps other adequate causes for these notorious social phenomena are to be found. These people have been demoralized and pauperized by the total annihilation of their former power, influence, and circle of duties;



by the impossibility of action, or a business, or a career ; by the absence of a hope, an object, or a purpose in life. * When the crisis of ruin has arrived, when the tribe has increased far beyond the means of support, family pride gives way before starvation, and some of the sons do enter the English service in subordinate situations ; but whether the Company's salt produces much modification in the feelings of any of the family with regard to the blessings of British rule, is perhaps rather doubtful.

The sepoys, therefore, for the last fifteen years, have heard loud execrations in every place of public resort against the grasping and greedy policy of their foreign rulers ; they were taunted with being themselves the cause of the ruin of the country : alternately flattered and reproached, they were told that their bayonets had alone enabled the Company to blot out the names of the most illustrious native monarchies, and to extinguish the last remains of Indian glory. The sepoys were told that but for their overwhelming numbers and discipline the military power of the Mahrattas of Gwalior would never have been destroyed, that they had now broken the strength of the Sikhs, and that in a short time the Company would not have an opponent on the continent of India, that not a Nabob or Rajah would be left to be deposed and plundered, and that then the British Government would either discharge them all,



or send them across the sea to conquer the countries of Burmah, Persia, Arabia, and Russia. And the sepoys were reminded that, after all their fidelity and warlike exploits, not a man from their ranks, not a man of their caste or race, was admitted to any exalted rank, wealth, or dignity; that they were certainly paid regularly, but that in many points their little extra emoluments and allowances on active and foreign service had been cut down, and that while a few of them might expect to rise by seniority to the rank of jemadar or subadar, with about a quarter of the pay of an ensign just arrived from England, they could never hope to attain, or to see any man of their race attain, to the rank and authority even of the youngest English ensign. They were reminded that even the miserable pensions allowed to them when worn out with long service had been reduced of late years; that the native princes gave as good pay as the Company, that a man was never discharged for old age from their service, but was allowed to draw his pay and be excused from all duty, and that the sons of old servants were always enrolled on their father's death, even though too young to do any actual service, even though infants in arms. They were asked if, for such beggarly rewards as those offered by the Company, for such contemptuous treatment of their bravest and best comrades, they were for ever going



to aid in the enslavement and degradation of the whole Hindoo race. They were told that they were themselves mere slaves of the Feringhees, and that at last the Feringhees would destroy their caste and turn them into Feringhees, body and soul, so that they might no longer be able to make excuses against going on board ship to fight against the Russians and the Burmese. With the exception of a few "general service" or volunteer corps, none of the Bengal Infantry were engaged to embark on board ship or to serve out of India. No Brahmin or Rajpoot can preserve the strict rules of his caste on board ship.

For years had taunts and sarcasms of this description been bandied about in every bazaar, for years had these matters been seriously discussed by the sepoys themselves. They were left entirely to their own devices, and had a public opinion of their own, and aspirations, fears, jealousies, aims, and a national pride, totally unsuspected and totally un conjectured by their English officers, very few of whom had ever in their lives sought acquaintance with a native, or met with one with whom they were either able or willing to converse on terms of equality or familiarity. Year by year the general execrations increased, until at last their own country, the birthplace of nearly half of the Bengal sepoys, Oude, was annexed; the King, their chief, the representative, in their eyes,



of all the ancient renown of their native province, the faithful and devoted friend of the English Government, even he was condemned to be a mere pensioner, and departed as a suppliant for justice from the palace of his ancestors, while his elephants, his horses, even the contents of the state wardrobe, were sold by auction at Cawnpore for the benefit of the Company's Government.

But immediately following this climax of annexation, touching the very hearths and homes of the sepoys, came an order of Government, directing that for the future all recruits for the Bengal army should be engaged to serve in foreign parts, and to embark in ships whenever it should be necessary. It was true, then! All India had been conquered, and now the sepoys were to be sent to foreign countries. The order indeed was made to apply to recruits only, and not to sepoys already in the service; but who could believe that they would long be spared? The war with Russia was just concluded; then came the Persian war, and the expected war with China. The greased cartridges followed most opportunely; and there could not now be a doubt that the intention of Government was to qualify them all for ship-board and foreign service by loss of caste, by treacherous ceremonial defilement. They were ripe for revolt, they were ready to believe anything; a few active, ambitious Mahomedans now saw



the opportunity, took care to fan the flame, and to spread a hundred inspiring rumours of a general rising; the emissaries of the Lucknow nobles and officials did their best when the first mutinies took place, but I doubt if there ever was a regularly organized conspiracy. The struggle must have taken place within a very few years; it could not have been deferred much longer. The sepoys were the first in the field, because they were the only organized, collected body of armed men; because they knew that no one would begin without them, and also because the last insult, and actually exciting cause of the outbreak, the supposed greased cartridge, forced them into the field. This has been no prætorian mutiny; the sepoys were led to expect that every native chief, and every man of the warlike castes, would join at their signal, and expel the cold, haughty, and grasping Europeans for ever from India. And throughout India, though all were taken by surprise—for the actual outbreak was not the result of a carefully arranged and premeditated conspiracy—there has been an almost universal sympathy for the rebels, and even those more enlightened natives, who well knew the hopelessness of the attempt, and the ruin which a local and temporary success would bring upon themselves, rejoiced at a check having at last been given to the overweening pride and self-complacency of the British Govern-



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ment. In India, as in all other lands, the rich and prosperous are conservatives; there are many sagacious and far-seeing persons in all classes except the very lowest, and there are many truly loyal subjects, especially among the educated natives of the Presidency cities; but no one who has observed the signs of the times can doubt in what direction the hopes of the people at large pointed.



° LETTER VII.

CONFISCATION OF LANDED ESTATES.

IN India we see an immense and populous Empire subject to an alien race, undeniably far superior to the natives in knowledge, skill, and energy, in veracity and justice. Divided and scattered by the fatal and mysterious customs of caste, half the people exalted above and the remainder degraded below hope, the occupations and rank of all fixed (according to strict principle) for life, and apathy and resignation encouraged by the spirit of their religion—the Hindoos for a thousand years have been the slaves and victims of a succession of conquerors. In many districts a state of chronic war has only ceased within the memory of men now living. Heroic deeds have often graced their annals, but united action under the hideous tyranny of caste has hitherto for ever been impossible. It has often been made a subject of reproach against the people of India that their civilization, if it has not retrograded, has been stationary for many years. Even granting to the full extent the justice of this reproach it cannot be denied that at that critical period when the presence of the English began to be felt in India, everything portended the approach



of great changes. The Mogul power was destroyed in all but name, all the more important viceroys had become virtually independent ; and the vast Mahratta armies were founding Hindoo states and upholding Hindoo nationality in every part of the peninsula. Holkar, Scindiah, the Bhonsla, and the Guicowar, all Sudras of low caste, had become powerful monarchs. The mass of Hindooism was moving. But it is useless to speculate on what *might* have been the issues of those revolutions, the enmities and divisions consequent on which contributed greatly to the establishment of British power. These revolutions were checked by our superior influence, and our supremacy is a great fact. For fifty years we have been the undoubted paramount power on the continent of India ; and no prince has dared to fire a shot or take a step without our permission. We have stopped the independent development of the Hindoo races by taking the management of affairs into our own hands, and condemning their best men to insignificance and inactivity. We have carried the system of class-government to the greatest extreme, retaining all the honours and high emoluments of government in the hands, not only of a class, but of foreigners—not only of foreigners, but to a great extent of inefficient and unqualified foreigners.

None know better than the more intelligent natives of India that life, property, and personal



liberty were never so secure under Emperor, Nabob, or Rajah, as they are under the British Government ; that cruel, arbitrary, and capricious punishments are forbidden by the laws in force ; and that fixed principle and the absence of passion and partiality are the characteristics of British rule. But with all this the higher and better class of natives have no attachment to our Government. A native of birth and education may in some degree admire and esteem the English, but if he possesses an atom of manly pride and self-respect, he must regard with dislike and indignation a system which, however favourable to the merchant, banker, and cultivator, ignores and threatens to destroy the ancient aristocracy and those of the higher classes who are not engaged in trade, shutting out from them all hope and prospect of retaining or regaining their place, position, and rank in society.

For not only does our system of administration tend to exclude all men of birth and station, and their children, from any honourable post, civil or military, under Government, but the policy of Calcutta, intensified within the last twenty years, and urged to excess under Lord Dalhousie, has ever been directed to diminish as much as possible the extent of land held rent-free, or by the tenure of a very light or nominal tribute, by the old families of the country. Except in Bengal Proper, where Lord Cornwallis's



perpetual settlement was carried fully into effect, and which is the most prosperous and contented province in the empire, there is no such institution as private property in land in India. Rules and precedents are formed, founded on rare and tyrannical acts of the despotic Monarchs of India—Tippoo Sultan, the Peishwa, and others—to extinguish private rights in land or hereditary charges on the revenue; but no respect is paid to ancient custom when it appears to secure a family in the permanent possession of an estate. On every succession the *sumnuds* or title-deeds are called for, and the slightest flaw, or the absence of express assurance by the granter of perpetual hereditary possession, even although the estate may have been enjoyed for more than one generation, will frequently be held sufficient to justify the confiscation of the estate, with the grant, perhaps, of a pension for one or two lives of half the income of the estate. Imagine such a commission of settlement and inquiry set to work by an absolute or a republican government in England or in France! It is in every respect, I maintain, an iniquitous, an impolitic, a destructive proceeding. It is true that a native monarch was absolute, and that his relations, nobles, and high officials had no regular or legal mode of enforcing their acknowledged rights against him if he chose to act in an arbitrary and grasping manner towards them; but



they not the less did possess clear, undisputed, recognised, acknowledged rights on his protection and support, and they were almost invariably held sacred. We seem to think ourselves justified in availing ourselves of the exceptional arbitrary power of refusing to recognise, or of extinguishing those rights, but not to conceive ourselves bound to their general observance. And it must also be remembered that if the absolute monarch confiscated estates sometimes, he also granted estates to others, and that from these privileged classes all the great civil offices and military commands were filled. So that every feature of our rule tends to the impoverishment, degradation, and exasperation of the most elevated and the most improvable classes of the country, those who ought to form our conservative classes, and who are conservative and attached to our rule, wherever from peculiar circumstances they have been allowed to exist undisturbed.



LETTER VIII.

REFORM : IN WHAT IT SHOULD CONSIST.

I SHOULD be sorry if any imperfections of expression in my former letters should have led the reader to suppose that I am an advocate for rapid and radical and sweeping changes in the government and administration of India. I object to our general policy of the last thirty years, especially during Lord Dalhousie's tenure of office, as having been essentially radical, revolutionary, and destructive, both in imperial acts of state, and in minor fiscal and administrative measures; as having tended to ruin and exasperate the most reflecting and influential classes, and with them to destroy elements of strength, stability, and harmony, which a stroke of the pen in a period of transition may efface, but which a century of the wisest government cannot create. I deprecate as destructive a policy which, instead of introducing and encouraging our own absolute security of property, and of its descent, has rendered the tenure of the proudest and most valued rights, possessions, and privileges, more precarious than it was under the despotic but patriarchal rule of the native princes. I do not regard as conserva-



tive that system which threatens to perpetuate the retention of all offices of dignity and high emolument in the hands of a chartered and "covenanted" guild of foreigners, and to exclude the most able and the best qualified natives from all possibility of an honourable and distinguished career, from all interest in our empire, and all fellowship with our race. But, although I certainly do consider that some acts of restitution and restoration might be appropriately and gracefully blended with those brilliant rewards for the fidelity and active aid of native chieftains, which are required no less for the support of our national honour than as an expression of our national gratitude; and although I consider that we must prepare to abandon the present most dangerous, inhuman, and insulting system of official hierarchy, monopoly, and exclusion, yet no one can be more convinced than I am of the necessity of caution and care. What I earnestly desire to see is rather some evidence of altered disposition, aims, and principles, than any striking and immediate change in our outward practice and policy. Let us lose no time, however. We can better afford to lay the foundations in the plenitude of our power and triumph, than in a period of discontent and agitation. Let us not present one more example of the neglect of "that wise lesson which experience teaches, that there is a time when to yield wins the affections,



another, when it only obtains the contempt of mankind.”*

The scrupulous conservation of rights and possessions, the extension by commutation, by new grants, and, I should add, by sale, of our English security of landed tenure, administrative and social reform, and vitalization of the empire, by the gradual association of distinguished natives in all grades and departments of the public service, and the gradual elimination and exclusion of unqualified Englishmen, should be the guiding principles of the new era. The absorption and decay of the old system will give ample time for the sure and solid growth of the new.

And when an institution, a law, a ceremony, or an establishment has fallen into contempt and disuse, has become inadequate from the lapse of time, or has become corrupt, dangerous, and offensive, it is no true conservatism to endeavour, in defiance of every indication and warning, to prop it up once more, or to galvanize it into unnatural and mischievous life. Thus the Indian Regular Army has exploded in blood and fire, the Bengal Army has abolished itself effectually; the Bombay and Madras Armies have felt the contagion, and have indeed nothing in themselves so peculiar as should make the warning less significant with regard to them. Nothing has been

* Roebuck's 'History of the Whig Ministry.'



more distinctly manifested during the late period of rebellion and excitement, both in the Bengal and Bombay corps which mutinied, and in the Madras regiments that were tampered with, than the utter helplessness and want of influence of the European officers. It is painful, it is odious, to be compelled to write in this strain at a time when so many of these countrymen of ours have exhibited such glorious devotion, when so many have suffered and perished nobly, and so many more are doing good and gallant service; but, in truth, in many instances, the bloodshed and suffering were augmented by, and those very acts of daring and devotion were the offspring and consequence of, that very want of influence over the sepoy and insight into their true feelings, to which I have called attention. They are indeed doing good and gallant service, but not with their regiments. The regimental system was at fault, not the men; the system by which the delicate duty of commanding armed men of another race and colour was entrusted to unqualified officers, without experience, without interest in the work, and without authority; the system by which the ignorant and careless cadet could grow up by mere seniority to be the ignorant and careless commandant of a regiment or general of a division; *the system* was at fault, and its faults have now been blazoned in characters of blood and flame, so that all can see who are not wilfully blind.



I regret to see that three new "extra" regiments have been raised in the Madras Presidency, and that all the native battalions of that army have been recruited up to 1000 strong from their former strength of 700 sepoy each. But we will consider this as a mere measure of immediate and temporary emergency. The regular sepoy regiment system must be doomed for ever; it is condemned by its fruits; nor can we afford, financially or prudentially, to keep up so large a force of trained and formidably armed infantry, to do duties which could be better performed by an efficient police. We should lose nothing in real military strength by reducing our sepoy infantry to the lowest possible number of battalions, organized on the irregular plan, sufficient to furnish reliefs for Pegu, Aden, Singapore, and other foreign stations, and to form a valuable auxiliary to the British infantry in India, and in any Eastern campaign. Both for preserving the public peace in India, and for imperial and external warfare, for which sepoy infantry never could be relied on, we should foster the irregular cavalry, the arm in which the British army has always been deficient.

One absolute and conspicuous result of the rebellion of 1857, is therefore the spontaneous reduction of our regular sepoy army by upwards of fifty battalions; and it is to be hoped that the lesson to be drawn from this great fact will not be missed. It



may be remarked *en passant* that by universal admission the sepoy, both on our side, as the 31st at Saugor, and against us, everywhere, have fought quite as well without any European officers as they ever did on any occasion with them.

Another result is equally obvious and indisputable—a great increase of our financial difficulties, a loss and extra expense combined in one year which perhaps would not be much over-estimated if taken at ten crores of rupees, or ten millions sterling, the climax of a deficiency of a million and a half per annum during five years.* I can see no remedy for this but in a reduction of the army and other establishments, which must be in a great measure prospective. Although the permanent proportion of European troops in India must certainly be somewhat increased (*not* to any great extent), yet on the whole the army and other establishments, as may be explained in detail when required, could be rendered much more efficient at a much less expense than at present.

But the most important results, and the gravest lessons and warnings arising from the events of 1857 remain yet to be considered. Has such a result been produced as must in some degree modify our relative position, and our general tone and bearing for the

* *Vide* Lord Dalhousie's farewell Minute, par. 23, p. 8.



future, with the Native States of India? What effect has been produced on the public opinion of India? When all opposition has ceased, when every trace of the rebellion has disappeared, will the popular belief in our invincible power have been strengthened or diminished?

I believe that our relative position with the Native States has been materially altered by the occurrence and course of this rebellion, and that the native princes have morally and politically gained a higher and more independent standing than they enjoyed before the outbreak. I believe it, and I rejoice at it; I believe that this is no loss of power to us, but that on the contrary our paramount imperial power on the continent of India may now be consolidated and secured, openly avowed and distinctly acknowledged, in a manner that has not been hitherto attained,—if the lesson to be learned from the events of the year 1857 be duly appreciated and carried out. Our position towards the Native States, partly from the essentially faulty nature of the unlimited right of interference exercised by the British residents in conformity with treaties, partly by really unauthorized encroachments in the same direction, had become most anomalous and embarrassing to both parties, weakening and degrading the Native Sovereign and his ministers without adding in the least to our influence or dignity. The general tone and



bearing of our intercourse with the Native States, and of the consultative minutes of the Supreme Government, especially during Lord Dalhousie's tenure of office, with regard to them, appears to me to have been very bad, unfair, unfriendly, offensive, and threatening. I rejoice therefore at the inevitable change of their position and of our tone and bearing, and cannot regard the change as anything but a gain both for us and for them. At the same time I consider that it involves a striking contradiction and condemnation of Lord Dalhousie's foreign policy.

Lord Dalhousie, writing in 1851 to the Nizam of Hyderabad, on the subject of the balance of a debt due to our Government, recommends him to dismiss or reduce the number of his Arab troops, and reminds him that ours is "a great Government by whose friendship alone" he has "so long been sustained, whose resentment it is dangerous to provoke," "and whose power can crush" him "at its will."* Now, granting all this to be true, where was the necessity of this vulgar blustering in time of profound peace, and on a matter of finance? Could it be supposed that the Nizam was ignorant or forgetful of the enormous power of the British Government? Surely such language might have been reserved until the Nizam had taken some unfriendly or treacherous

* Papers relative to territory ceded by the Nizam, p. 42. 1854.



course, which no member of his family has done during the last sixty years. In such a case, what terms more galling, what threat more unequivocal, could be used towards him? But these unstatesmanlike and unseemly phrases, though I doubt not sincerely employed by Lord Dalhousie, were not even reasonable or true. Able at all times to command the resources of that State, to control its acts, and to dictate its policy, it is not true that we could have "crushed it at our will," at least not with safety or impunity. There are many Indian statesmen who would have told Lord Dalhousie (probably *have* told him) that the existence of the Hyderabad State is a most valuable guarantee of the peace of Southern and Western India. All the most experienced officers of the Hyderabad Contingent, long before any extensive disaffection in our Native Army was dreaded, were well aware that their men could not be relied on to fight cheerfully against the Nizam himself. One distinguished officer, the lamented Brigadier William Mayne, whose opinions on military affairs were not despised by Lord Dalhousie, used to say that an open war between the Company and the Nizam would be quite as difficult and bloody a business as the Punjab campaign of 1849 was. But could Lord Dalhousie have crushed the Nizam at his will in 1857? Or if he had crushed him at his will in 1854, 1855, or 1856, what would have been



the state of the Deccan during the rebellion of 1857?

I allow that Lord Dalhousie was justified in enforcing, was bound in duty to enforce, by all legitimate means, the payment of the debt due by the Hyderabad State; I know that in his minute of the 27th May, 1851, which immediately precedes in the Blue Book the letter from which I have just quoted, he expressly disavows all intention or wish to interfere in the Nizam's affairs, or forcibly to assume the administration of his dominions, as had been recommended by the Resident, General Fraser; and yet the sole object of this threatening letter, and of the negotiations which followed it, was to obtain from the Nizam the cession in full sovereignty of nearly one-third of his territory; and the result was that the desired districts were assigned and transferred to our management for the support of the Hyderabad Contingent, and the payment of the interest of our debt. Here is an apparent inconsistency between professions and practice. But these transactions are not at present under discussion; it is solely against this overbearing tone, and against this language, so irritating and so alarming to a friendly power, that I protest.

But this seems to be one of Lord Dalhousie's favourite formulas; he appears to have considered its application to our most faithful allies peculiarly



appropriate and impressive. We meet with these very words, embellished by a little bad grammar, in the seventh paragraph of his farewell minute reviewing his eight years' administration, applied to the present Rajah Runbeer Sing of Cashmere, son of Ghoolab Sing, who was then in a declining state of health: "And when, as must soon be, the Maharajah shall pass away, his son, Meean Runbeer Sing, will have enough to do to maintain his ground against rivals of his own blood, without giving any cause of offence to a powerful neighbour, which he well knows can *crush him at his will.*"

In July, 1857, Rajah Ghoolab Sing did pass away, and Runbeer Sing, instead of wasting his resources in fighting any rivals, managed somehow or other to advance fifty lakhs of rupees (500,000*l.*) to Sir John Lawrence, and to send 3500 of his own troops to assist in the siege of Delhi.

At Hyderabad also, in the same critical period, the usual agitation and disorder of a succession occurred—Nasirood-dowlah, the late Nizam, having died in July, 1857—yet the firmness of the present young Prince restrained the warlike and turbulent population of his dominions, and facilitated every movement of the Madras Army; while more than one-half of that Hyderabad Contingent, which Lord Dalhousie considerably and politely informed the Nizam's father, in the letter already quoted, was



“the main support on which depended the stability of his throne,” was pushed forward beyond the Nizam’s frontiers into our own provinces, to uphold the stability of *our* empire against our own mutinous troops and our own rebellious subjects.

Scindiah, Holkar, the Guicowar, the Rajah of Rewah, and others, have resisted all attacks and temptations, and the persuasions of their own relations and vassals, and have remained faithful to us; the Rajahs of Puttiala, Jheend, and Bhurtpore have given us timely and zealous assistance in men and money. The despised dependents, the useless incumbents, have proved our best friends in the hour of need; and we must be truly blind if we have failed to remark how formidable they would have been as enemies. They themselves cannot have lost sight of the moral advantage they have gained by the events of 1857, and by the part that they have played therein.

We have hitherto placed ourselves in all sorts of anomalous and confused relations with the Native States; we have originally treated with some of them as equal and independent powers, and have gradually depressed them into tributaries, and virtual though not acknowledged feudatories. And this state of things has not brought with it the genial patriarchal ties and mutual sympathy of lord and



vassal; but, on the contrary, we have taken everything that we could get—cessions of territory, tribute, loans, contingent troops—and have given nothing in return except that general military protection provided for by treaties, and for the expenses of which we have always exacted a full equivalent; while during the last thirty years they have seen us watching to take advantage of any excuse or pretext for exercising our assumed right of general succession and of deposition.

Now I think this state of things must cease; the relations of the paramount power and of the minor sovereignties of India must be placed on a more definite and a more equitable basis; and the bonds of federal amity and mutual obligation must be drawn more closely. The native princes must be taught no longer to regard us with alarm and suspicion, as a haughty, inscrutable race, whose interests and objects are totally incompatible with their own, and who, however long the evil day may be deferred, are their destined and determined spoilers and successors; and we, on our part, must learn to recognise the native monarchies as forming an essential condition and a main security in the development of the full power, resources, and wealth of our Eastern Empire.

But for the inauguration of our imperial status among this congeries of princes, and chieftains, and



nations, a name more significant and more imposing than that of the Honourable Company is required. The Queen's name would be indeed a tower of strength in India. For loyalty, and wonder, and child-like confidence, and all the "cheap defence of nations," remain available in that excitable and productive stage of civilization through which India must pass to be replaced by other, and, as we think, higher sentiments and motives, in a more advanced and deliberate social state. It will be very long before any important number of the hundred and fifty millions attain to that independence of thought and will on which we pride ourselves in England. And, in the meantime, complicated interests will have sprung up, closer ties will have been formed between the two countries, and will be maintained and strengthened by every dictate of inclination and reason. We have not hitherto appreciated the sources of power that lie in the peculiar phase of civilization and social life in India. We have hitherto neglected to guide, to mould, or to encourage the political sentiments of the natives, which are thoroughly monarchical and conservative, but have left them to feed on the memories and glories of bygone days and fallen dynasties. It is our fault that they have continued to gaze for the centre of their national existence, interests, and honour, anywhere but towards the British Sovereign; nothing



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has tended to impress them with the grandeur of forming an important part of the British Empire. There never was a more favourable time than the present for inaugurating a nobler, a more consistent, and a truly imperial policy.



LETTER IX.

BRITISH PRESTIGE.

THE King of Delhi, the supreme idea of legitimate sovereignty among both Hindoos and Mahomedans, the popular *de jure* Emperor of India, has been struck down in an open and formidable conflict with the *de facto* rulers of the country. He has leagued himself with mutinous traitors, and whether that league and that conflict were planned, or accidental, or forced upon him by the rebels, they were not provoked by any actual breach of faith on our part towards the Delhi family. The house of Timour, even if not literally annihilated, has for ever lost that calm and lofty position of acknowledged legitimacy, whose power alone, and not its right or its dignity, is in abeyance. No member of the family who survives, after having been dragged through the bloody mire of Delhi, can be an object for the pride, respect, or hope of any section of the Indian population. The political importance of this change, produced without any aggression or breach of faith on our part, must be very great in such a country and amid such a people as those of India, and if duly appropriated and improved by us, may be the golden opportunity of our empire.



The wonderful rise of the territorial power and influence of the East India Company is a just source of national pride. Its progress in India was natural, defensive, and founded on no fixed design or treacherous combination; and perhaps its early and unwilling conquests could have been effected so justly and so prudently by no other machinery and by no other motives than those of a trading company, more anxious for solid profits than for glory. But the abolition of its commercial privileges, and at last of its commercial functions, virtually extinguished its independent existence as a power in the State. The Company has become a mere name. The authority and specific duties of the Court of Directors have been gradually so curtailed and hampered by the Board of Control, that it has sunk into a very cumbersome and not much respected Board for consultation and registry, whose members are substantially remunerated by patronage. The patronage so created, so fostered, and so justified, has grown, as I have endeavoured to show, into the greatest burden and scourge of India, and the greatest danger and weakness to its rulers. The East India Company is now a mere obstruction, a veil between the Sovereign and her Indian subjects, between the people of Great Britain and that of India. Its decay as a ruling power followed its decay as a trading company; its part had then been played out, its possessions had



swelled into an empire, its vast affairs and interests required imperial guidance, the control not of a single Minister, carried on almost in secret, but of all the balanced forces and all the healthy publicity of our free constitution.

In India, the mystery which formerly enveloped the name of the Company has quite faded away, and it is now very generally regarded as a body of farmers or contractors, standing between the nations of India and the Queen of England, and it is credited with the usual attributes of farmers and contractors. This impression, although essentially false, is *in its terms* so near the truth, and it is so difficult to define the exact nature and the actual cause of the continued anomalous relations of the Crown and the Company, that only the best educated and best informed natives can ever be brought to a clear and correct view of the case. And even then they are universally of opinion that this apparent contract is really injurious to the interests of both countries, and to the honour of England. The time has obviously come for this fiction to disappear, and for true imperial relations to be established and avowed.

There still remains one question proposed for our consideration in this letter, which I think may be answered in a very few words. What effect, we asked, has been produced on the public opinion of India? When all opposition has ceased, when every



trace of the rebellion has disappeared, will the popular belief in our invincible power have been strengthened or diminished? The question is not an agreeable one to face; but it would be the blindest and most short-sighted policy for the present rulers of India to try to flatter themselves or the people of England into a state of self-satisfied security by a hasty and superficial reply. We may at least be certain that we have lost nothing in reputation; the numerous successful combats of our troops against tremendous odds have taught the natives that the old stories of the prowess and determination of the Feringhees were no exaggerations. The strongest and best disciplined assemblages of the rebels, such as those who opposed Havelock's first advance towards Lucknow, and the Gwalior mutineers near Cawnpore, have had their guns taken from them by much smaller numbers of Europeans, with those daring bayonet charges which convince a beaten enemy of their inability and inferiority more than any other description of defeat. It will be long before that conviction wears off. A long familiarity with the appearance of British soldiers in our peaceful cantonments had perhaps begun to breed contempt; but there will be new and fresh accounts sent abroad now of his stern though buoyant courage, his physical strength, and his ever cheerful energy and devotion. And when the full tide of the reinforcements from



England begins to flow through Hindostan, the crushing destruction and punishment of all resistance will be so rapid and so exemplary, and the demonstration of force, both during the advance and the subsequent triumphant disposal of the troops in their quarters, will be so striking, that a much higher estimate of British resources in men and military power in general will be formed than perhaps ever existed before in the East.*

But on the other hand, it must be remembered, that a great part of our prestige depended on the popular belief in the indissoluble cohesion of our establishments; our rules were so elaborately definite and distinct, our payments so regular and punctual; there was so little scope under our administration for the efforts of ambitious intriguers who might attain to high office with a view to the subversion of our power; all went on so calmly, obediently, and noiselessly, without any appearance of passion or caprice, forming such a contrast when compared with the procrastination, irregularity, and arbitrary commands, frequently disobeyed, observable in so many of the Native States; and the main springs of our power were worked at such a distance, and by such unattainable personages, that all despaired of seeing

* The effect of our reinforcements has not been nearly so rapidly and strikingly triumphant as was expected when this letter was written in December, 1857.



any great convulsion or disturbance in our provinces or among our own servants. But now they—and here I allude chiefly to our doubtful friends or well-known enemies in the Native States of India—have seen at once the lowest and most liberally paid of our servants, our own disciplined troops, spontaneously throw off their allegiance and commence a war of extermination against us. This is a lesson the full significance of which they cannot have failed to learn, and which they will never forget.

The rebels, the disaffected, and the ambitious have also learned two other lessons; they have learned that two maxims, very commonly, indeed universally, current in India, are in a great measure true. First, that the enormous numbers of the warlike inhabitants constitute a vast and overwhelming power, which, were they but unanimous and true to themselves, not even all our military science and resources, and all the bravery of our European troops, could subdue. The second is, that England is far away, and that we require many months in order to procure reinforcements from thence.

It is a proverb in India, that if every man were to throw a stone, the English rulers would be buried beneath the shower. And they have seen the rebels, by sheer dint of superior numbers, for four months hold Delhi against all the forces that our Government could collect against them. They know that



day by day they sallied forth to harass and annoy the besiegers, and that though the quality, and spirit, and tactics of the troops of Government were incomparably better than those of the rebels, still their numbers enabled the latter to hold the city for four months, and after the assault to defend successive positions until they were enabled to withdraw leisurely with a large quantity of stores and plunder. They know that the defenders of Delhi did not meet with the support and co-operation from outside that they had a right to expect; they know that if, for instance, the ten or twelve battalions, with cavalry and guns, who mutinied in the Gwalior territory, had promptly come into the field, instead of allowing themselves to be kept idle by the Maharajah Scindiah, and had attacked the Delhi besieging force in the rear, the siege must have been raised at the least, even if by this combination the complete destruction of the army of Government had not been effected. Let it be observed that I do not answer for the absolute soundness of these calculations and suppositions; but many calculations of this sort have been made, and they are very far from being absurd or ridiculous.

They know that by the mere pressure of overwhelming numbers Havelock's victorious little band was compelled to retire from the Oude territory without effecting the relief of Lucknow; that again a still larger victorious force under Outram and



Havelock was, by a similar pressure of hostile numbers, prevented from relieving the garrison, and was in fact compelled to seek protection within the same walls, so long defended by the gallant handful of soldiers they came to save from a fate that could not have been much longer delayed. And finally, they know that Sir Colin Campbell, when the rebellion had lasted for eight months, with a still larger force and a superb train of heavy guns, after signally and repeatedly defeating the rebels and rescuing the British garrison, was compelled, by sheer pressure of overwhelming numbers, to evacuate the city of Lucknow, and to withdraw the greater part of his troops from the Oude territory, leaving only a garrison in the Alumbagh to form a basis for his future operations when reinforced.

And it must not be imagined that the rebels have no exploits or successes to boast of, to remember, and to record. Like all beaten forces, and especially like all ignorant and half-civilized people after a defeat, they will never overrate their own numerical strength on particular occasions of battle, and will always magnify ours; and, in short, always endeavour to save their own credit and fame. And their partial successes will be swelled by report, and rumour, and frequent narration, into glorious victories. They will not, in short, have a worse opinion of their national prowess after the cessation of all resistance



than they had before the mutinies commenced. In all probability they and the people at large will have a much higher opinion of their capabilities than they ever had before. The very fact of their having dared to oppose, and for a year* to combat against, the great English Company Bahadoor, will be a new and memorable possibility that few would have dreamed of twenty years ago.

On the whole, I must arrive at the conclusion that we shall have gained nothing in prestige, even if we have not lost, at the termination of this tremendous crisis; and I must repeat once more, that we must not think of garrisoning India, but of governing her. A continent held against its unwilling and awakened inhabitants by the physical force of foreign soldiers, even if the notion were not indeed the bloodiest of chimeras, could never be anything but a source of weakness and expense to the dominant nation. In England we cannot afford to recruit, in India we cannot afford to pay, a *much* larger force of English soldiers than that which was in India when the mutinies commenced.

* Nearly two years now.



LETTER X.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVES : SOCIAL RESULTS.

A MARVELLOUS and unprecedented social problem has presented itself in India for our solution, and for the instruction of the world. We see a docile and intelligent people in a very backward state of civilization, forced on the road of material and moral progress by the foremost nation of Europe—the hard-earned fruits of the innumerable travailings and martyrdoms of the educator brought freely to the pupil's home in maturity and perfection: the printing-press, the steam-engine, railways, gas-lighting and the electric telegraph, equality before the law, freedom of exchange, liberty of speech and publication; we have brought them to India; let us not refuse her the means of comprehending, appreciating, and enjoying these blessings. Let us not begrudge the gift; let us not misunderstand or slight the true community of interests between the giver and receiver. Let us be well assured that our interests and those of the dependent nation are inseparable; that if we rob them of the wealth, power, or influence to which they have a just claim, we shall sooner or later rob ourselves of all power and influence what-



ever; that if we do not trust them, we may expect them every day to become less trustworthy; we may degrade them, we may break their spirit, and destroy their self-reliance, but we shall end by making them our bitter, intolerant, and brutal enemies, and not our humble friends.

Is it not quite clear that the interest of the British nation in the annual provision made for some hundreds of young gentlemen, and the fortunes and pensions acquired by some scores of retired servants of the Company, is of very circumscribed importance, and of infinitesimal value, when compared with its interest in the development of the resources of a vast empire, and of the tastes and desires of an immense and intelligent population? India must no longer be regarded as a field for patronage, but as a field for spreading our commerce, laws, science, and all that we have of good to give; as an inexhaustible field of producing and purchasing power, from whose gifts and wants our industry by land and sea may for ages reap a liberal and ever-increasing harvest.

India at present takes about nine million pounds' worth of exports from England, of which about six millions are coarse cotton goods. The causes of this small consumption (about a shilling a head for the population to which we have access by the ports of India) are manifold. The roads and other communications with the interior are bad and few—



depressing both production and consumption. The great mass of the people undoubtedly are very poor, but there are other and more fundamental reasons. Although the English have politically changed the face of the country during the last century, they have had so little social intercourse with any class of the people that very little effect has been produced on their customs or habits of life, and, except at the three Presidency towns, in their principles of trade or economy. Until the year 1857 the British Government might boast of having for nearly forty years preserved the entire peninsula of India in peace and security; and yet confidence in our inviolable respect for property, and insight into our commercial operations and combinations have been so scantily extended, that beyond the Presidency limits very few natives ever avail themselves of investments either in the Government funds or in joint-stock companies; very few, indeed, comprehend the nature of such investments. An immense amount of capital is buried and hoarded, and an incalculable quantity of gold and silver converted into jewels—partly as conveniently disposable and portable property, and partly as almost the sole criterion of the dignity and respectability of a family, and as almost the sole æsthetic taste which the natives seem to recognise and cherish. Doubtless, the high rate of interest results in a great measure from the hoarding



of money and constant demand for jewels. And the standard of household comfort is very low, even among the middle and higher classes.

It is utterly impossible to estimate the beneficial effect in stimulating industrial activity and in developing the national wealth that would be produced by extended education, arising from the proclaimed and accomplished eligibility and admission of educated and well-qualified natives to honourable and important offices, and from their more intimate and friendly relations with the English. A great demand for the produce of every species of European industry would follow the introduction of higher tastes, new desires, and a new standard of comfort, which could not fail to be the result of intercourse between the two races. There is now to be seen among the uneducated rich a very general desire to possess articles of European manufacture, which manifests itself at present in rather a barbarous and ostentatious manner. What is wanted is a more regulated and reasonable taste and fashion; and this would be the natural growth of greater knowledge, and of association in the pursuits of business, duty, and amusement, with a race of more elegant and cultivated habits of life. A flood of light would be poured on the inhabitants of India from the mature and accumulated experience of Europe. From political economy, and from the mere historical state-



ment and explanation of the progress of England, they would learn that it is better to invest money profitably than to hoard it. They would learn a thousand modes of employing their capital; they would discover as many contrivances for increasing both their comforts and their wealth. From the higher classes downwards would flow the stream of prosperity; industrial activity would be stimulated, and the labouring classes feel new wants and hopes arising contemporaneously with the power of gratifying them. For enlarged desires and a higher standard of comfort will not long be confined to a particular class, but will extend their bounds in all directions. The experience of nations confirms the truth of this. Let us lose no time in opening the door for the admittance of *qualified* persons from among this intelligent, docile, and laborious people to a share and an active interest in the government of their own country. Thus alone can human relations be re-established between the two races; thus alone can a deadly blow be struck at Hindoo superstition and Hindoo stagnation.

For there could be no such deadly blow to the indescribably obstructive and demoralizing Hindoo institutions as the gradual growth of a body of men of all castes, elevated simply by their educational acquirements and moral characters to positions of profit and dignity, and to the privilege of familiar



and friendly association with the English. The ignorant and undistinguished men of high caste could not long maintain their position in general estimation in the presence of their tried and proved superiors. Nor would the influences brought to bear upon the latter be of less weight and consequence. Intercourse with the English, and the freemasonry of English knowledge among themselves, would destroy the charm and value of caste distinctions; first one prejudice would be laid aside, then some other concession would be made, while the conversation, society, and customs of their natural companions would become distasteful and often revolting. Family divisions, social martyrdoms—those bitter cures, those painful antidotes—would become more common. And then the missionaries, both professional and voluntary, would be able to work with some success among classes to whom hitherto they have had little opportunity of access.

Can any one seriously suppose that a class of high native functionaries would not be loyal and attached to the British rule, that their admission would not introduce a conservative element into our empire, and a progressive and proselytizing element into Indian society? Which is likely to be the greatest check and stumbling-block in the way of Hindooism—a sprinkling of unconciliatory and unsympathizing Europeans, or a thick planting of educated natives,



who, while understanding, and respecting, and sympathizing with their countrymen, would show them by their life and actions that they could no longer join in their idolatrous ceremonies and superstitions, or bow to the senseless tyrannies of caste? Whether originally of high caste or low, the powerful influence of such men would soon make itself felt.

The Protestant missionaries have done more to propagate English knowledge, manners, and morals among the natives than the Government has done, and more than a Government can or ought to attempt to do. They allow no caste prejudices to be displayed in their schools. They openly and frankly avow their intention of destroying as far as they can, by the exhibition and inculcation of what they believe to be truth, all confidence in Hindooism. Unlike the great majority of English officials, especially the juniors, both civil and military, whose repulsive demeanour only enhances the value of caste distinctions, they mingle with the natives on terms of friendship and familiarity; no haughty pretensions and parade of superiority deter and forbid intercourse. Their motives and objects are fully proclaimed; they practise no concealment; yet they are seldom distrusted or disliked, because it is very generally known that they have no connexion with the Government. Belonging myself to no recognised religious sect, I have but little liking for the



special theological method and objects of the missionaries, with the exception of their healthily negative and destructive operations against idolatry, and against the malignant and impure superstitions of the country. Nor have I any exalted notion of the progress they have made in the conversion or enlightenment of India; their numbers are very small when compared with the extent of this immense continent, and there are among them (though the same might be said of almost any class of men) but few men of brilliant qualifications or of commanding abilities. Only in one district, that of Tinnevely in the extreme south of the Madras Presidency, where I believe there are about fifty thousand baptized persons, have they had any marked success in proselytism. But undoubtedly the missionaries have done something towards diffusing those sentiments of self-reliance, self-respect, charity, and veracity which will be found as more or less powerful influences wherever English freedom and European science prevail. And their labours have done something to raise the character of the English nation for sincerity, faith, and benevolence.

English knowledge, tastes, and habits, these are what are wanted to shake the gigantic structure of Hindoo superstition; and once well shaken, it will never recover itself. Neither the gross and naked idolatry, nor the revived transcendental Vedantism



can long endure a close attack on a field enlightened by European science. Place before the natives of India the hope of an honourable career, and in a few years they will be paying for their own missionaries. For already there is a strong predilection for English knowledge, a strong desire to trace the sources of that apparently stupendous and still growing intelligence, which towers above and spreads around them in innumerable forms. Let them but know that the study of English opens the road to honourable and high employment, and any standard of erudition might be demanded by the Government, and would be attained by the aspirants for the public service.

For the natives do not want the capacity, nor are they without the necessary facilities for learning. If the Government were to insist on good English scholarship, familiarity with the various branches of a modern general education, and with special subjects adapted to each particular service, as the conditions of employment, with a more liberal pay and better prospects of promotion, there is no reason to doubt that the summons would be responded to with marvellous activity. There are numerous families who possess the means of securing the very best instruction for their children; there are many more people capable of educating scattered about the country than would be imagined; and the supply and



quality of the teachers and of the subjects taught in the schools (those of the missionaries included) would be increased and improved according to the demand. The only educational institutions to be supported by the State would be, as at present, high schools and universities ; principally for examining and granting degrees and diplomas, without which no candidate should be admitted to any of the higher departments of the public service, and, I repeat, the people of India would soon be paying for their own missionaries.*

* When the Sirdars of the Deccan, the descendants of the nobles and military feudatories of the Mahratta Empire, assembled two or three years ago to present a valedictory address to Mr. Le Geyt, at Bombay, they made choice of a native missionary, a converted Brahmin, the well-known Narayun She-shadri, to be their spokesman.



LETTER XI.

QUALIFICATION OF NATIVES FOR THE PUBLIC
SERVICE.

I WANT no sweeping changes ; I have no wish to see a native, however distinguished, thrust with ostentatious liberality into the Supreme or the Legislative Council, or seated on the bench of the Sudder Adawlut. There are many more modest situations than these, especially in the judicial department, for which natives might easily be found, who are much better qualified, in every respect, than ninety-nine out of a hundred of those "covenanted" civil servants, who alone and all of whom are at present eligible, and all of whom are supposed, by virtue of their "covenants," to be qualified for all appointments, fiscal, judicial, and diplomatic. I do not wish to see any unqualified person, English or native, placed in any office, or any qualified person prematurely discarded ; but I do wish that the doors shall be opened to merit, and that the repeatedly enacted provision that no person is to be ineligible to any appointment on account of caste, creed, or colour, shall cease to be a mere clap-trap formula and become a living verity.



I don't want to see any "grand comprehensive" scheme for general education. Government schools and stipendiary instruction attract the wrong sort of people, and cultivate an objectionable breed of priggish upstarts. Do not let us have an unnatural system of forcing, but try to encourage a natural growth. Every one complains that the "Young Bengal" class is superficial in its acquirements, flippant and presuming in manners and conversation. There may be some injustice in the general censure, and there are undoubtedly numerous striking and conspicuous exceptions; but I suspect there is considerable truth in it; and I attribute these apparently objectionable results of English education, partly to the antagonistic feelings and deportment caused by the almost universally haughty and supercilious manner of our countrymen towards natives, but in a much greater degree to the fact that English education has hitherto affected the wrong classes. There is no inducement held out to persons of recognised rank and wealth to give their children a good English education. Such persons will not allow their sons to commence life in a position little, if at all, raised above that of a menial servant, with but few prospects of rising, after many years of humble and laborious service, to the rank of a native judge on very insufficient pay—the highest prize attainable—and with no prospect of ever rising to the level in



rank or authority of the youngest covenanted civilian in the service. Could we induce men of rank by an equitable and reasonable admission of qualified natives to educate their sons for the higher branches of the public service, we should obtain a class of young men of dignified manners, with considerable self-respect, and with a position in society which would be some guarantee for their integrity and independence. Such young men would not be inflated by their novel acquirements, they would not be drawn out of their natural element, but would have a recognised right to associate with English gentlemen, without reference to that education which would render them more congenial and more equal as companions. To the low-born Baboo an English education, picked up at a Government or a Missionary school, may be his sole distinction and his sole stock in trade. He is liable to be unduly puffed-up, and unduly anxious to turn his acquirements to profitable account. To the young man of rank, his English education is merely an honourable and useful accomplishment and means of influence.

It must not be supposed that I lay any peculiar stress upon this point, much less that I would exclude any person from employment, or from competition for employment, on account of his caste or connexions, in India any more than I would in England; but I believe that those who can qualify



themselves without extraneous aid will in general be found to be better qualified, both morally and intellectually, than those who have been raised above their ordinary sphere by charity schooling, public or private, by Government scholarships, or other artificial machinery. Men of decided genius, and even of extraordinary talent, may be left to work their way upwards; at least the Government has no special faculty for drawing them from their obscurity in their early youth.

It is obvious that my firm opinion of the expediency and duty of requiring a high degree of proficiency in English learning is totally incompatible with the advocacy of any measure for the immediate or speedy admission of any large number of natives to a higher sphere of action. The greatest caution would be necessary at first. The work of a generation cannot be done in a single year or lustrum, but sure foundations cannot be laid too soon. The gradual process of absorption and decay of the old system would allow time for the selection of materials and the solid construction of the new.

Even with their present imperfect education and inadequate income, many natives have shown themselves to be able, acute, and upright in the performance of the duty of judge. This is the department of all others in which English officials are found to be the least competent; and for obvious reasons



they must, *cæteris paribus*—that is, even if equally well trained and practised in legal affairs with the native judges—continue to be inferior to the latter in the power of deciding with facility on the trustworthiness of evidence given in the vernacular language of the country. There are brilliant exceptions in favour of the European judges; but on the other hand there have been, and still are, many flagrant cases of incompetency among them. And I may confidently assert that there has never yet been a fair specimen of a first-rate native judge, educated as such an official ought to be, placed upon the Bench. There are native pleaders at Calcutta of first-rate ability, but the salaries and the position offered to native judges are not sufficient to tempt them from their lucrative practice and from metropolitan society. It appears most probable, therefore, that in this department the Government would first find an opportunity of manifesting its future policy, by promoting a deserving native to a high and honourable position. And surely the most safe and most noble gift from the ruler to the subject, the most certain pledge of confidence on the one hand, and the strongest tie of allegiance on the other, is the privilege of having independent and native-born judges. And these respectable and erudite men would be the first to come closely and intimately in contact with Englishmen, and thus initiate that



human fellowship between the races without which our mission to the East will for ever remain barren and dark. If we are not there as instructors, why are we in India at all?

It may be said that I have throughout exaggerated the importance of this question; that facilities of official advancement can little affect the bulk of a people under any Government, and least of all under a mild and just Government. But in the first place I distinctly deny that our civil administration, carried on as it is in a great degree by inexperienced young Englishmen, is anything like as just or as efficient as it ought to be, and as it would be if well-qualified natives were judiciously associated in it; and in the second place I maintain that, through the fair exaction by Government of a high qualification in the superior official ranks, we have the best prospect of extending education, of setting English ideas in circulation, and of instituting a community of interests and feelings between the governors and the governed.

But it has often been said, and will still continue to be urged with some appearance of plausibility, that when we view the low standard of morality among the natives, and especially among those in Government employ, it is absurd and paradoxical to propose to entrust more power and authority to those who so grossly abuse that which they already



possess. In fact, that the natives are not fit for any high employment, but that when they prove themselves to be so, by the acquisition of knowledge and the manifestation of a higher sense of honour and public duty, they may be employed. Some people will go so far as to say that they cannot hope or expect that the natives of India will ever be fit to take a share in the government of their own country until they have been converted to the Christian religion. It appears to me that this question may be very completely and very concisely answered and disposed of in its theological, its ethnological, and its historical aspect. At present I will only urge that it is really difficult to believe that any one can seriously hope or expect education to spread among a people, when the most able and the most enlightened cannot obtain a reward, in either wealth, position, or influence, for all their labour and acquirements. Nor is it reasonable to expect honour and loyalty to spring up and flourish as the return for neglect, contempt, and humiliation. Hopeless exclusion and proscription will not produce a reformation, but something very different.

Much as the feelings of the higher class of natives have been embittered against us, the English character is regarded with decided admiration and reverence. Very many of them are doubtful, many of them are fully conscious of much that is un-



reasonable, immoral, and degrading in their religions, manners, and customs, such as polygamy, the forced ignorance and seclusion of women, and the prohibition of a second marriage to widows. They yearn to penetrate the mystery of English honour and loyalty, the decency without restraint, and freedom from that mutual jealousy and enmity which so often distract their own family and social intercourse. But whither are they to turn for support? The abandonment of some very vile custom may involve loss of caste; and loss of caste is loss of friends and relations. And none but those of high rank and fortune could hope (even if they became Christians) to receive a friendly reception from the English. Indeed, so long as the Government refuses to allow them to rise to positions of respectability, denies them the opportunity of elevating themselves, how can the English community accord them social rank? But undoubtedly the great reason after all for this estrangement is, that so few of them are fit or congenial companions for us. English education will make them so.

There is little reason to fear that clever, well-educated natives in the possession of official rank and good salaries will have any difficulty in finding their way into society. Nor can it be doubted that the judgments and opinions of their English friends would exercise a great influence and control over



their public and private conduct. It is by intercourse with Europeans, by familiarity with their literature, habits of thought and taste, that a great ethical and social revolution may be commenced. Let us show them, if we are not afraid to invite comparison, the superior love and harmony of our homes, the simplicity and decency of our manners, and the elevating nature of European fine arts, of our employments, studies, and recreations. They will gain by the lesson; we shall not lose by becoming conscious of our true position as examples and instructors, and by the consequent duty of attaining or aiming at the somewhat ideal standard above indicated.

In many respects a somewhat ideal standard at present! The truth must be spoken. While there are comparatively few English in India who conciliate by their demeanour, there are also too many who do not edify by their example. This may appear a canting and impertinent truism, but it is not so if it can be shown that the present system of patronage tends to bring into the country, and to produce and foster there, much vice and idleness that would not otherwise exist. And there is this most unnatural and dangerous feature in the position of the English in India, that whereas in ordinary society the incapable and the vicious must in due course of time sink to their proper level, in the



Indian services, with a little good luck and prudence, they may safely and securely float, and rise far above the highest point attainable by the ablest native.

General Jacob, five or six years ago, in his pamphlet on the Bengal Army, pointed out the mischievous results of the number of useless officers in the Regular Sepoy regiments. "The Englishman," he said, "becomes too common to be held in proper and wholesome respect. He is seen holding no important position, but in the performance of trifling duties, which any native officer or non-commissioned officer could do equally well. He is often seen idling away his time in frivolous, or wasting his energies in vicious, pursuits. The prestige of the superior race is thus destroyed, when it too often happens that the European officer, having nothing important to occupy him, loses somewhat of his own self-respect." What General Jacob wrote with such force and prescience regarding the decrease of the British officer's prestige in the sepoy army, is equally applicable to every other branch of the public service in India. "We don't dislike the English Government," said a most intelligent native of rank in a newly annexed province to me—"we don't dislike the English race; but we can't endure the young English officers. Ignorant boys were not sent to domineer over us in former days." The extent to



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which this rapidly growing bitterness against English officers had spread would not have been credited, and would have been very generally denied, but for the terrible disasters of 1857 which revealed the rankling sore.



LETTER XII.

THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

THE truth is, that a sad want of sympathy, and a consequent want of consideration and reflection in forming a judgment, are at the bottom of that impatient dislike and contempt with which so many Englishmen descant upon the morals, manners, and customs of their Indian fellow-subjects. Undoubtedly it is difficult to avoid a feeling of unmixed disgust and contempt at the many instances of gross ignorance, superstition, untruthfulness, and still darker shades, visible in the words, and works, and ways of the people of India. But even in those traits of character and practice in which our race has really attained a high pre-eminence over the Asiatic, the latter is not so wholly deficient as our pride and prejudice persuade us. We can palliate and make allowances for the rapacity, the greediness, and the folly of our own countrymen; but we have no pity for the errors, no sympathy with the ambition, no eye for the virtues of the Hindoos. After taking into consideration the debasing and deadening effects of caste, I say the virtues of the Hindoos are extraordinary, and their national character presents a most hopeful field for improvement. But the accumulated



humiliations of a thousand years are not easily shaken off. Falsehood and deceit, the pursuit of an object by crooked and underhand arts, are much more common and more conspicuous in the conversation and dealings of the natives of India than in those of Englishmen. Under the yoke of alien conquerors what can we expect but the vices of slavery? Suspicion, dissimulation, duplicity, and falsehood, have ever been the weapons, defensive and offensive, of the weak and oppressed against the violent and unjust oppressor. Those among us who don't see that in proportion as English law and English freedom are conferred and comprehended, there is a decided diminution of Hindoo falsehood and duplicity, don't see it because they don't look for it, and don't care to look for it.

It will, however, be hardly necessary for me to quote contemporary and notorious cases of unveracity, and bribery and cheating, in both low and high stations of our own countrymen both in England and in India, to show that as a nation we are not as yet justified in throwing the first stone. And while the weakness, timidity, and ignorance of the Hindoos may extenuate their transgression, our strength and knowledge leave us no excuse. But we treat our own countrymen gently, and, more especially in India, avoid all unnecessary scandals; offenders are allowed to resign their offices, to retire



on pensions, or to sell their commissions. We wash our dirty linen at home; but the foulest rags of India are carefully selected and ostentatiously displayed as the habitual costume of the most respectable class of natives.

The vast majority of the native officials are miserably underpaid: and what, we may ask, was the purity by which the enormous fortunes of the Paul Benfields, and the host of English Nabobs, were acquired in the days when the Indian civilians received very small salaries? The English Government continues to pay its native servants on the same scale that they were paid by the old native Powers, and are now paid by the remaining Hindoo and Mussulman Princes. The receipt of presents and bribes is winked at, almost recognised as a legitimate source of emolument, by immemorial oriental custom: but the English Government, by adopting severe and degrading punishments as the sole remedy for corruption, has merely aggravated its infamy and secrecy, and has reduced both givers and takers of bribes to a state of permanent distrust and chronic desperation. Under native rule this abomination assumes a milder and more regular form; is pervaded by a rude notion of compensation for inadequate emolument, and is mitigated in practice by partial publicity, and by certain traditional limits of equity and compassion. And thus it does not involve so



much perfidy and injustice, or produce so much malignity and false accusation. The English Government attempts by merely penal measures to obtain the irreconcilable advantages of the cheapness of oriental, and the purity of European administration.

The evil effects of this vain attempt are increased by the little confidence and encouragement afforded to the native officials. Not only are they badly paid, but no amount of ability and faithful service can secure their advancement to places of consideration and profit for which they may be well qualified. Old age approaches; illness may at once deprive them of their small incomes; they must "make hay while the sun shines!" They find themselves with no more pay, with less responsibility and dignity, and with worse prospects than their fathers before them; what wonder if they think themselves at least entitled to their forefathers' perquisites? When confidence and recognition of merit are withheld, self-respect and honour are not very likely to be developed. And thus a better class of natives are deterred from seeking employment; a high standard of education is not and cannot be demanded; the purity of the public service does not improve; corruption is but seldom satisfactorily detected; and the severe penalties for bribery result in scarcely anything but occasional malignant and treacherous



charges and counter-charges in bewildering complication.

It is clear that this prevalent moral obliquity cannot be removed by merely penal severity. The reform of its servants cannot be directly effected by Government; and but little check over corruption and perjury can be maintained by any possible amount of vigilance or executive activity, aimed expressly at their suppression. The obstinate continuance of these offences is chargeable to a policy which lowers the position and self-respect of the officials by insufficient remuneration, and by confining them to subordinate situations in which they have little responsibility, and in which no distinction or high reward can be hoped for or obtained. But this national taint, the evidence of the misrule and internal distraction under which India suffered for so many ages, is now ripe for cure. Violent oppression, the great cause of the slavish vices, falsehood and deceit, has disappeared; and these vices must give way before the introduction of honourable, humanizing, ennobling sources of emulation, and of new ideas of honour and duty through the medium of the English language and literature, and by closer intercourse with English society.

And we must yet make a large qualification in the alleged scale of Hindoo untruthfulness, on account of the misrepresentation, misunderstanding, and mis-



trust on both sides. How often do we hear an English gentleman complain of the intense stupidity or perverseness or cunning of some particular native, or of natives in general, in never understanding, or pretending never to understand the simplest question, until they thus gain time to decide upon a safe or prudent answer! And undoubtedly some natives are very stupid, some are very perverse, some are very cunning. But I am sure that many of my readers know that in some of these cases the stupidity is all on the other side: that the indignant questioner constructs his sentences or pronounces his words in such a barbarous manner that no native, who has not served an apprenticeship to learn his style, ever can understand him; and that a great part of the stupidity and perverseness of *his* subordinates and servants may very fairly be referred to this cause. And if he is a man in power (as most English gentlemen in India are to some extent) and his temper happens not to be the most equable in the world, we shall be at no loss to account for some degree of cunning and caution in the natives around him, without attributing to them any extraordinary love of deceit. The Englishman, too often from prejudice, ignorance, or imperfect knowledge of the native languages and customs, and above all from want of sympathy, misunderstands and mistrusts all he hears, and passes his official life in a state of



mistrust and mystification. What wonder is it if mistrust and deceit increase and flourish within the influence of such a dangerous and unpersuasive chief? This is no overdrawn picture: nor is even the extreme case so uncommon as might be hoped.

The first necessary and essential step in our restorative and reformatory plan would be the stoppage of appointments to the covenanted Civil Service, which should be allowed to die a natural death. The constitution of the Civil Service, and the renovated machinery for recruiting its ranks with "highly educated" young men, must, as long as they exist, obstruct the gradual admission of natives to any of the appointments reserved for the covenanted service, and negative the idea that any such admission is, or has been, seriously contemplated.

The existence of a privileged guild of foreign administrators, in a vast empire abounding with intelligent, docile, and laborious men, exasperates all the reflecting and high-spirited natives, checks education by shutting out hope, and impedes the introduction of English knowledge, manners, and morals. And the annual influx of young gentlemen who have "passed with great credit," and must be provided for during life, threatens to perpetuate the exclusive system, and must be dammed up as a preliminary measure.

The Civil Service will never want defenders, either



from within or without its ranks. We may well be proud of them. But their high characters, their accomplishments and acquirements, are totally irrelevant to the question. The question is not whether the Indian Civil Service is a body of highly educated and honourable men, not whether a large number of able and experienced officials are included in its list, —not whether many distinguished diplomatists and governors have risen from its ranks: but whether the bulk of the service are so fully competent and so peculiarly qualified, as to render their very large salaries a piece of State economy, and to render justifiable and expedient the absolute exclusion of the natives from all posts of dignity, with the attendant and inevitable evils of their expulsion from English society, and a total check to the education and *conversion* of the higher classes. But in fact the ability and efficacy of this body have been immensely overrated—especially in England. The eminent usefulness of the few cannot hide the costly mediocrity of the service, and ought to prove no obstacle to its gradual abolition, forming as it does, the base and centre of an odious and iniquitous system of monopoly and proscription.

The successful administration of Mysore, the Punjab, the Saugor and Nerbudda territories and Scinde, by military officers and uncovenanted servants, will perhaps be considered sufficient proof



that a separate and sacred civil hierarchy is not by any means essential to the good government of India.*

I do not think that the new measure of open competition for recruiting the Indian Civil Service will improve its quality or the quality of its work in the least.

The defects and infirmities which are most conspicuous among the Indian Civil servants, are a dull mediocrity, an attachment to ancient routine, an admiration and worship of "reports" and "returns," an unconciliatory demeanour, and the permission, which of course is the virtual exaction, of a prostrate servility from all their subordinates. The English officials, instead of discouraging, succumb to the unmanly oriental man-worship, and thus become accomplices in a reciprocally degrading relation between themselves and the natives, while they despise the latter for its existence. These prevalent defects may, I think, be all traced to the same causes, the early age at which these gentlemen are invested with rank and authority, and their luxurious security of position and of promotion. But little stimulus or induce-

* I must not be supposed to be an advocate for what is called the "non-regulation" system of administration. It is only suited for recently annexed unsettled districts; and no wealthy, instructed population could endure or exist under such a slovenly, arbitrary régime.



ment to acquire superior qualifications for his important duties are afforded to the young civilian on his arrival in India. He soon ascertains that with the exception of the seats in Council and a few other high offices, promotion in the Civil Service is regulated entirely by seniority; and that no talent or exertion can possibly make him a Collector or a Judge a month before the time when he must succeed to such a post by virtue of his position in the list. His introduction to the service and initiation into its rules and customs are well calculated to instil a strong notion that he belongs to a chartered guild, and has a vested "covenanted" right to enjoy all its good things in rotation.

I don't think that the system of open competition is calculated to reduce or modify this sensation of absolute superiority and perfect security, and this confidence in vested rights and covenanted dignities, in the slightest degree. I rather suspect it will be found to aggravate them.

No time should be lost in putting a total stop to the tide of "highly educated" young gentlemen from England. Vacancies in the various civil departments can always be satisfactorily filled up from the army, from the bar, and from the uncovenanted ranks. Young men of approved abilities would not fail to present themselves for probationary employment.



European officers, taken from the Queen's or Company's army, for civil employment or for the command of native corps, should, after passing their period of probation, be removed from the original regiments, and during the transition period the vacancies in our regular native corps should *not* be filled up by the appointment of cadets. Ultimately there should only be three selected European officers to each native corps, and the remaining officers should be efficient and respectable native officers,—not subadars and jemadars, but lieutenants and captains, native gentlemen with an English education.



LETTER XIII.

THE INDIAN ARMY.

WE shall never get trustworthy native officers for our regiments until we entrust them with real authority and endow them with real rank. Our subadars and jemadars, who have proved so useless as leaders and so faithless as officers, had no qualifications and no genuine position of command. Old worn-out men, raised by mere seniority from the ranks in which their own brothers and sons are serving, how can they be expected to feel any distinction of interests from the common sepoys, or any special responsibility towards us?

We must keep up a considerable native army in India to aid in the defence and in the preservation of the peace of our vast empire, and to support, when necessary, our influence and interests in Asia. The idea of permanently maintaining an army of 80,000, or a larger number of Europeans, in India, is preposterous. The burden of recruiting and transporting, of paying and lodging, and pensioning such an immense body of English troops at such a distance from home, would be intolerable both to England and to India. The notion of supplementing our



European force with Kroomen or Kaffirs, or West Indian negro regiments, appears to me to be quite chimerical. As a temporary expedient, to produce an immediate effect, the employment of negro soldiers in India might be highly advisable. But the experience of 1857 seems to have proved that this description of troops is not immediately available or procurable. And if there were a regular establishment of foreign black troops in India, let me ask what arrangement would be made for the time-expired, invalided, and worn-out Kaffirs, Kroomen, or Jamaica negroes? Many of them would, after ten or twenty years' service in India, prefer to remain in the country. In short, while the greatest difficulty would be found in keeping these alien savages, ignorant and devoid of resources for occupation or amusement, in good order or good temper, in the midst of a population which would hate and despise them, the result at no great distance of time would inevitably be an amalgamation of the foreign black soldiers with some of the lower castes. We could not well refuse to enlist the children of these unions, who would have no other livelihood open to them. Thus we should, after a generation or two, have only succeeded in introducing another mongrel caste into the country, whose sympathies and interests, like those of the half-breed Arab mercenaries in the Hyderabad, Gwalior, and other native States,



would soon be diverted into local channels. We should have nothing really in common with them.

Besides these somewhat remote considerations, I very much doubt the soldier-like qualities of these African races, their amenability to discipline, and their gallantry and intelligence in the field. I suspect they would be found impatient and desponding under danger and fatigue. If in small numbers, the addition to our strength would be insignificant; if in large numbers (which I believe to be impracticable), they would be very unmanageable, and a great source of irritation to the people of the country.

The great principle which I desire to enforce is, that we cannot hold India against its awakened public opinion by any possible amount of foreign physical force; that we cannot garrison the country, but must govern it; and that when we do govern it, its native military strength will be completely available and quite safe in our hands, adequate for all possible local requirements, and also for many imperial purposes to which, under the old system, it was never found applicable.

I cannot entertain a doubt, looking especially to the state of the finances, that when the force of the rebellion is finally crushed, a very large reduction of the army will be necessary. It is in that direction that the military reorganization must proceed. We don't want a hundred thousand English soldiers, or



any combination of Europeans and negroes, to counterbalance and hold in check a native army of double that strength, but we want such an extensive reduction of our regular native troops as shall leave them in a reasonable and fair relative proportion with that force of British troops which must always be maintained. That force ought not to be allowed permanently to exceed by more than four or five thousand men the number of the combined Queen's and Company's European troops—dragoons, artillery, and infantry—which were ordinarily stationed in India before the outbreak of 1857. About forty-five thousand men judiciously distributed would be found amply sufficient for the defence of the country, and to support the authority of Government, and this number would include a moveable reserve in the hill stations.

The most striking example of the extravagant and unwieldy condition of the native army of India, as at present constituted, is to be seen in the native regular cavalry, in which the lust of patronage has forced a radically faulty organization to a pitch of absurdity, the simple statement of which is equivalent to a condemnation. There are still borne upon the army lists of the three Presidencies twenty-one regiments of Native Light Cavalry,* mustering each

* In Bengal, ten regiments (of which all but a few hundred men have either mutinied or been disarmed), eight in the Madras, and three in the Bombay army.



about 400 sabres. The Madras cavalry regiments at present have only 350 troopers. To each regiment there is a sinecure colonel, whose pay is about 1200*l.* per annum, drawn probably at Bath or Cheltenham. There is a lieutenant-colonel, who, if in command of the corps, receives, including the profits of the saddle contract, 2200*l.* a year. The major's pay is 1100*l.* a year. There are no less than seven captains; and the pay of a captain in command of a troop of 60 men, including the profits of the troop contract,* amounts to 840*l.* per annum. There are nine lieutenants, on 420*l.* a year, and five cornets, on 360*l.* a year.

One of the subalterns holds the appointment of adjutant and another that of quartermaster, both with handsome allowances in addition to their pay. There is a surgeon with 1000*l.* a year, also an assistant-surgeon with 420*l.* a year, and a veterinary surgeon with 500*l.* a year. There is a riding-master, a warrant officer, whose pay is about 200*l.* a year. And there are a sergeant-major and a quarter-master-sergeant, whose duties are chiefly clerical, having reference to the regimental records, accounts, and stores. All this immensely expensive staff of English officers—who are all entitled to pensions on retirement—is kept up for the purpose of bringing

* For horse-clothing, ropes, watering bridles, &c.



into the field four hundred imitation dragoons of very indifferent quality, who in the quietest times are always grumbling about the severity of their riding-school and stable duties, and the insufficiency of their pay ; who have no confidence in our saddles, our bits, or our swords ; and who, even when not mutinous, have on active service always been unreliable.

And besides the cumbrous regimental system, a stud and remount establishment is maintained on so regal a scale that every horse supplied to the cavalry is computed to cost between 60% and 70%. The cost of the horses in fact is so great, and their keep and veterinary charge so expensive, that four British dragoons can be entertained at the same annual charge as five of these native troopers, who on the other hand have no special quality or aptitude which can render them at any time or under any circumstances more useful or more economical than British dragoons.

But the Irregular Cavalry of India form a special and peculiar body of admirable light horsemen, whose place could not be supplied, and whose functions could not be performed by any number of the finest English dragoons. They will cheerfully undergo fatigue, and exposure, and bad living, that would disorganize British troops in India. They know the country and the habits of their country-



men so well, and are so capable of shifting for themselves, that a regiment may, for particular purposes of police, or escort, or reconnoitring, send out for more or less lengthened periods, small detachments and parties, and even single men, a process which, if attempted with English dragoons, would be utterly destructive of discipline, and, at the same time, utterly inefficacious. They find everything themselves—horses, arms, and clothing; they are not dependent on the stud, the Ordnance, or the commissariat. If fairly paid, as the Hyderabad Rissalahs are, they will move off at a day's notice anywhere, and require no marching money, or tents, or supplies of any sort. If fairly paid, and if their old custom of absolute family property in the "assamee" or "situation," and right to have a horse, be upheld, they ask for no pensions from Government. And although their horses are far inferior in appearance and in weight to those supplied by Government, the exploits of the Irregular Cavalry in the field have far surpassed those of the regulars.

The Regular Light Cavalry regiments have, as I before stated, each a sinecure colonel on 1200*l.* a year,* and are each commanded by a lieutenant-colonel on

* It may be said that these are the prizes of the army, rewards for long and gallant service, and so forth; but I should say, give your rewards openly, as pensions or as generals' pay, but do not burden and encumber your regimental system with ornamental colonels, promoted by seniority only.



2200*l.* a year, with twenty highly-paid English officers also borne on the rolls of the corps, some of whom are of course always absent on leave, some employed on the staff, and the remainder present with the regiment, where they have very little authority, very little responsibility, and nothing to do except mere duties of parade and routine. The native officers, as in the entire regular native army, are entirely useless in every point of view.

The irregular regiment is commanded by a selected officer, usually of the rank of captain; his pay is 1200*l.* a year, and altogether his position is highly honourable, independent, and responsible, and renders him in his own estimation and in that of his contemporary brother officers, one of the fortunate men of the service. He is assisted by two juniors—a second in command and an adjutant, the former receiving about 600*l.* and the latter 500*l.* a year, both of whom may be considered as in a course of training and probation to succeed to commands, if their abilities and conduct entitle them to so important a charge. The native officers—although there might be a great improvement in this respect, for no particular qualification is exacted from them—are efficient, and have some authority and responsibility.*

* I fear, however, that there has been of late years some tendency to extend the ruinous custom of promotion by seniority into this branch of the service and to diminish the authority and influence of the native officers.



The infantry regiments, organized on the same principle, with only three selected English officers, may be compared with the regular native corps of the line, and will be found quite equal in steadiness on parade, in their conduct on active service, and in their discipline; while the expense of the regular infantry regiments, with twenty-six English officers, all entitled to pensions, is nearly double that of the irregular corps.

The regular native cavalry should disappear entirely. Eligible men, from its ranks, might be allowed to purchase the Government horses at a moderate price, and enter the new regiments on the Hindostanee plan as silladars. The number of regiments of this description should be very largely increased. They are by far the most effective troops for keeping the peace, suppressing minor disturbances, and for affording aid in general to the civil power.

The native infantry in India, according to the army lists of the three Presidencies, including all local corps, may be stated in round numbers to amount to 200 battalions, of which 155 battalions are on the regular plan, with 26 English officers to each. One hundred battalions, 50 for Bengal, 30 for Madras, and 20 for Bombay, all organized on the irregular principle, with only three selected officers, and all taking their tour of foreign service, would



be amply sufficient for all duties; and there would always be an available force for the exigencies of war.

Both in the cavalry and in the infantry I would have a certain small proportion of *corps d'élite*, with superior pay and privileges, into which meritorious soldiers from the ordinary regiments should be drafted as a reward for gallant and faithful conduct. These regiments of Guards, if the system were judiciously worked, would prove at once the greatest encouragement and the most perfect check on the masses of the native troops and on the population in general.

By the process of which I have hastily and briefly sketched a mere outline, the services of at least 1500 English officers, who add nothing to the strength or to the influence of the Government, or to the efficiency of the service, whose pay amounts to at least £450,000 a year, and whose pensions form an ever-increasing prospective burden on the revenues of India, would be dispensed with. The number of infantry sepoy would be reduced by about 70,000.

There would be no great difficulties in the details of transmutation, or in the process of absorption. No great injury or loss need be inflicted on individuals. For a few years there would be a heavy charge for pensions; but still the immediate saving would be very great; and the ultimate reduction



of the military expenditure would be at least two millions per annum.

Unless the question of the military charges be speedily dealt with in a bold, comprehensive, and statesmanlike manner, without regard to patronage or private interests, I can see no prospect of the finances of India being reduced to an equilibrium.



LETTER XIV.

RECEPTION OF HER MAJESTY'S PROCLAMATION.

NAGPORE, *November*, 1858.

"HER Majesty's gracious proclamation" was published on the 1st of this month in every city and large station of India, with such circumstances of military display and official rejoicing as local resources would permit. At Calcutta, Allahabad, Bombay and Madras, I doubt not that an effective spectacle was produced, and in the three great Presidency towns alone was to be found, I fear, somewhat of hope and somewhat of cordiality in the feelings with which the inauguration of the direct rule of Queen Victoria was greeted by the influential classes of the people. And even our scanty band of native well-wishers have been disappointed; the proclamation has fallen flat; it has produced no impression but one of distrust and dissatisfaction. Of course at present I can only speak positively for the city near which I am residing, but you may rely upon it,—in whatever *couleur-de-rose* hues the despatches of Government may report the reception of "Her Majesty's gracious proclamation,"—that every succeeding mail for the next six months will confirm the truth of my representations. This large city and its adjacent military



stations afford all the materials for ascertaining the temper of the times among the Mahrattas and other races of the province, the high-caste Hindoos and Moslems of Hindostan and Rajpootana,—of whom a large floating population has for many generations resorted to the capital of the Bhonsla Rajahs for service or for trade,—and among the military castes and tribes of the Deccan and the Carnatic, who fill the ranks of the brigade of Madras troops. At few points in the Peninsula is there such a convergence of nations and languages.

The result of my observations and inquiries is, that the Queen's proclamation was expected by all classes of natives but the very lowest, not—as some of the old school may assert—with indifference and apathy, but with the intensest interest and hope, and that it was received on its promulgation, not with enthusiasm or gratitude, but with general discontent and disappointment. All had trusted that the royal rule would have been instituted with some striking and sovereign act of grace, and that the proclamation would have contained some special promise of restoration or recognition to those heirs of illustrious historical families who have been rejected and despoiled within the last ten years, and who nevertheless preserved a friendly attitude, and—some of them—rendered substantial support and assistance during the terrible crisis of 1857. They hoped that



there would have been some grateful and approving notice of natives whose fidelity and services during the rebellion have been particularly conspicuous, some grant or earnest of reward and honours, and some binding pledge and authoritative instructions that the present rigid system of monopoly, by which natives are excluded from all share in the Government and from all the higher branches of administration, should be broken through at once. The reality turned out to be very different from the ideal proclamation of their expectations and hopes; there was nothing genial in it, and though couched in weighty and well-rounded sentences of some dignity, the effect was still commonplace and cold. The universal remark among the natives was:—"It is only the Company's government continued."

I hope I shall not be misunderstood; I am describing what appears to me to have been the general impression produced upon the native mind; I do not quarrel with the proclamation myself; I am not sure that I could suggest the alteration of a single sentence. I know that the royal proclamation—and more especially while a rebellion was still raging—could not, with propriety or prudence, contain expressions of repentance or promises of reformation; that personal recognitions and nominations should be made by the Viceroy, the local Executive, and would have been out of place in such a document,

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which was confined to the matter in hand, surely important enough, the announcement of the cessation of the Company's government, the assumption by the Queen of direct imperial rule, and a statement of the broad general principles upon which that rule would be based. But I do agree with my more intelligent and enlightened native friends who, admitting all this, regret that the royal proclamation was not accompanied with some signal acts of grace and favour, which might have been published in due form in the Governor-General's name, and which would have stamped every assurance of religious and national neutrality, and respect for property and privileges, contained in the proclamation, with the true blazon of royalty.

There was one negative ground for hope given in the proclamation,—the East India Company was not praised or lamented, and no reasons were given for its extinction. Whether intended or not, I cannot say, but this circumstance was noted and considered as significant and of good omen by our well-wishers among the natives.



LETTER XV.

THE OUDE LAND SETTLEMENT.

I CANNOT too often repeat that there is no necessity for precipitate alterations in the machinery of our Eastern Empire; there is no necessity for lavishing rewards or for multiplying concessions, or for the elaboration of any symmetrical and specious plan, by which a large number of natives should be immediately introduced into the higher branches of the public service. When once the principle of their eligibility has been practically accepted,—as it now is legally and ostensibly admitted,—opportunities of manifesting the new policy cautiously and efficaciously will not fail to present themselves. But we must have a new policy.

If the Queen's gracious proclamation is not to become a byword and a reproach,—if its assurances of religious and national neutrality, and respect for property and privileges, are to be stamped as something more real and reliable than the stereotyped formulas of the Honourable Company,—no time should be lost in the manifestation of a new policy, and in evincing repentance by restitution and reconciliation. We shall want friends in India before many years have passed over our heads. Our difficulties are only beginning.



I am not, as you know, "a distinguished officer," nor have I the smallest pretensions to be classed as "an experienced officer" in any department of civil or military administration ;—but I do claim to have acquired, by a long-continued, familiar, and not ungracious intercourse with many intelligent natives of various ranks and occupations, the power of gaining their confidence and of ascertaining with accuracy their real opinions and predilections. Time will show whether my report is true, and whether my prognostications are trustworthy ; but in the meantime be warned not to place implicit reliance on the official or non-official representations of "distinguished and experienced" officers, whose high position prevents them from ever hearing the undisguised unvarnished truth, while their perceptions are blinded and their minds biassed, by their being thoroughly committed to those fatal maxims and false principles of Indian government, which have been avowed and brought into action with increasing recklessness ever since Lord Dalhousie landed in India in 1848. No doubt many of our Indian civil servants in high places have acquired great dexterity and vast experience in their several departments of administration,—but so has the shoemaker in his trade ; and yet the latter functionary sometimes does pretend to know better than the wearer where the shoe pinches, or even to know that it does not pinch



at all. Do not expect that any distinguished North-West Collector, or Calcutta Secretary, beyond the age of forty, will ever throw any light upon the causes of the rebellion, or bring forward the new measures of imperial policy and administration which the times imperatively demand.

Don't trust the men who, more than any others, are responsible for the revolt, and who are reprobate and unrepentant,—such men as Mr. R. D. Mangles, formerly of the Bengal Civil Service, late M.P. and Director of the East India Company, and now one of the Indian Council, who still persists at every favourable opportunity in parading that shallow and inadequate, but for the Honourable Company most convenient and exculpatory hypothesis of a military mutiny, as the explanation and description of one of the most thoroughly national rebellions that history has ever recorded, who still defends the Tuam Commission and the other modern appliances for confiscating landed property, and who has always been an advocate for annexation ;—and Mr. Gubbins, who having been during a quarter of a century trained and exercised as a North-West Collector, became the author of that revenue settlement of Oude, the great principle of which, as he admits in his book, was that the Talookdars, the great feudatories of the country, were “mere middlemen,” farmers of the revenue; and who now wishes to persuade us that



the annexation was a highly popular measure, and that the villagers of Oude were devoted to the British Government.

The lamented Captain Crump, of the Madras Artillery, in one of those admirable letters which he contributed to the *Saturday Review*, tells a different tale, when describing Havelock's brilliant though unsuccessful attempts to relieve Lucknow. "Thrice," says he, speaking of one of the affairs among the mud-walled villages of Oude, "did a part of one of the best regiments in the field charge an enclosure containing a number of men, and thrice were they driven back with heavy loss." "The sepoys made but a feeble defence, and were speedily driven out of the village. Not so the matchlock-men." These matchlock-men, thousands of whom are still in arms against us, are the villagers of Oude, who rejecting the proffered "tenant-right" of Mr. Gubbins, follow the banners of those oppressive "middlemen," the Talookdars.

But the existence of this general revolt is much more distinctly asserted by the highest authority in India, the Governor-General himself. In paragraph twenty-seven of his letter, dated the 17th June, 1858, in reply to the despatch of the Secret Committee (Lord Ellenborough's), Lord Canning says:—"It might have been expected that when insurrection first arose in Oude, and before it had grown to a



formidable head, the village occupants who had been so highly favoured by the British Government, and in justice to whom it had initiated a policy distasteful to the most powerful class in the province, would have come forward in support of the Government who had endeavoured to restore them to their hereditary rights, and with whose interests their interests were identical. Such, however, was not the case. So far as I am as yet informed, not an individual dared to be loyal to the Government which had befriended him. The village occupants, as a body, relapsed into their former subjection to the Talookdar, owned and obeyed his authority as if he had been their lawful suzerain, and joined the ranks of those who rose up in arms against the British Government. The endeavour to neutralize the usurped and largely abused power of the Talookdars by recognising the supposed proprietary rights of the people, and thus arousing their feelings of self-interest and evoking their gratitude, had failed utterly." And in paragraph twenty-eight, "Those whom we had desired to benefit, and had to our thinking benefited, did not value the rights which we had restored to them, and far from standing up in defence of those rights, and in support of the Government which had been the means of reviving them, they had acted in complete subordination to the Talookdars, and had been no less forward than these latter



in their efforts to subvert the authority of that Government, and to expel its officers."

Strange perversity of human nature in Oude! Here may be seen one of those cases which prove the truth of the saying so current among gentlemen who have "been in India," that natives can't feel gratitude, don't know what gratitude means. Emancipated by us from those tyrannical "middlemen," the Talookdars, the villagers are found to join with their oppressors and to endeavour to expel their benefactors. Can no satisfactory explanation be given of this mysterious behaviour?

I think that a strong hint of the real explanation, and also an indication that Lord Canning is not far from sound views on the subject, may be found in the same despatch from which I have just quoted. In paragraph twenty-five, after detailing the means by which—as he had been informed—many of the Talookdars had acquired or enlarged their estates, including deeds of sale extorted from the village communities, his Lordship adds that the villagers "*lost but little by the act, for the practical fruition of proprietary right they had scarcely known.*"

There is the great secret;—the villagers not only lost but little by the act, but they gained a great deal. The frame of Indian society is incomplete without the Zemindar or Talookdar, a landlord who is strong enough to deal with the Government on



fair terms, and to protect the ryots, especially from the underlings of office. His relations with his tenantry are controlled to a considerable extent by ancient custom and public opinion, while his power and wealth are in a great measure dependent on their good-will and on their prosperity. In fact, it is a complete mistake to speak of the proprietary rights of the village communities as if they were real and valuable. The ryots of India, where no landlord intervenes between them and the Government, never have had,—under Hindoo, under Mahomedan, or under British rule,—any substantial right but that of occupancy. No petty occupant has ever been able to secure a fixity of terms or of tax on his holding, or to escape from the additional illicit exactions of Government officials.

The villagers of 'Oude perfectly understood that Mr. Gubbins's "tenant-right" was nothing more than the right to pay their revenue directly to the Government instead of to the Talookdar. They knew quite well that the profit-rent, which was lost by the Talookdar, was no gain to them, but fell into the coffers of Government; while they lost the protection and countenance of their hereditary chief, and were transferred to the covenanted and uncovenanted mercies of Mr. Gubbins and his myrmidons.

Mr. Gubbins and the class of "crack collectors" say that the Talookdars are "mere middlemen;"



Lord Canning, in his reply to the Ellenborough despatch,* objects to their being called "the Barons of Oude," and conveys the notion that they were for the most part upstarts and usurpers. I believe these views to be totally erroneous, and I think they have been proved to be erroneous by the conduct of the people of the country throughout the rebellion. They evidently regard us and our revenue system with no complacency, while they look upon the Talookdars and Zemindars as the lords of the soil and as their natural leaders; and for my part I cannot but consider their title as good as that of any landed aristocracy in Europe or Asia. The abstract rights, the fundamental and original tenures of the great European landholders will not bear investigation;—but who proposes to investigate them? We cannot afford to have the framework of society torn asunder on abstract principles. We have learned the value, and therefore uphold the validity of prescriptive rights. All landed property in the world has passed, or has to pass, through that social era when "they may take who have the power, and they may keep who can." Every Cosmos rises out of chaos. The conflicting interests and claims of sovereign and baron, lord and tenant, State and squatter, have to be disposed of in every country and in every century.

* Paragraph 24.



We interfered in India when tenures were in a transition state and prescription imperfect; and unfortunately—except in Bengal Proper, which Lord Cornwallis's perpetual settlement has made the most flourishing and contented Province in India—instead of confirming and consolidating the actual and substantial rights which we found in existence, we went back to abstract principles, bungling and disputing about them to this day, revolutionized society, ruined the great families, and conferred nominal rights of ownership upon under-tenants and labouring occupants, which they had never possessed under the native Governments, and which they are incapable of employing to advantage under ours. And thus the North-West Provinces are filled with decayed families of rank, and with village proprietors involved in debt and incapable of rising, all impoverished and all discontented; while four-fifths of the land in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies are in the hands of beggarly cottiers, who submit to be rackrented and tortured, and who have not a hope or a motive beyond the morrow.

The Mahomedan Kings of India, with a rude but unerring instinct, had gradually introduced some elements of stability and improvement in the social structure. They created a class of great feudatories and wealthy landlords between the Government and the occupants of the soil. The Mahratta rulers, following



this example, continued and extended this system throughout their dominions. And sooner or later, according to the good service rendered to Government, interest at Court, or local power and influence possessed by the landholder, the revenue assessment of his estates had a tendency to become fixed, and the tenure to become hereditary.

Before the commencement of our administration in Oude, the prescriptive rights of the Talookdars and Zemindars,—with the exception of some of the smallest and newest among them,—had been established and secured as between them and the Sovereign, but the respective limits and rights were still unsettled and undefined between different members of the class, and between them and their tenants, and the tillers of the soil. It was for us to confirm all actual beneficial possessions, and to recognise or establish equitable relations between classes. But, unfortunately, there was a hankering after North-West principles, and a prejudice against independent landlords, which led Mr. Gubbins and his “highly experienced” coadjutors into those fatal experiments of *restoring* a proprietary right to the village communities; “the practical fruition of which they had scarcely known,”—or in plain terms, which had never existed, and which was of less than no value to the villagers, since it deprived them of their chieftain and left them exposed to the underlings of office.



Lord Canning himself thus gives us a glimpse of this restorative process :—"The Government of India, perhaps with more of chivalrous justice than political prudence, determined at once to reinstate these proprietary occupants of the soil in what were believed to be their hereditary rights, and to restore the ancient village communities; and upon the annexation of the country the Chief Commissioner was instructed to make the settlement of the land revenue with the proprietary occupants of the soil, to the exclusion of middlemen. This instruction was carried into execution in some districts with undue haste, harshly, and upon insufficient evidence; and where this took place, injustice was done to the Talookdars, some of whom were deprived of villages which had long been attached to their talookas, and their titles to which had not been satisfactorily disproved.

"The injustice might, and probably would, have been corrected in making the revised settlement, but this does not excuse or palliate the wrong."—(Lord Canning's reply to the Ellenborough Despatch, paragraph twenty-six.)

Perhaps there is some little ambiguity of meaning here, with "chivalrous justice" at the beginning, and "injustice," "wrong" that nothing can palliate, at the end of the paragraph; but never mind, it is clear that Lord Canning sees the error that was committed, and for which, it may be added, Lord



Dalhousie, and not he, is responsible. The following extracts from Lord Dalhousie's instructions to the Chief Commissioner will suffice to prove the eminently conservative principles upon which the administration of Oude was founded. "The settlement should be made, village by village, with the parties actually in possession, but without any recognition, either formal or indirect, of their proprietary right."

* * * "It must be borne in mind, as a leading principle, that the desire and intention of the Government is to deal *with the actual occupants of the soil*, that is, with village zemindars, or with the proprietary coparcenaries, which are believed to exist in Oude, and not to suffer the *interposition of middlemen as Talookdars, farmers of the revenue and the like*. The claims of these, if they have any tenable claims, may be more conveniently considered at a future period."*

That future period has arrived at last, I hope.

It is openly asserted by our well-wishers among the natives (as, for instance, in the *Hindoo Patriot* newspaper) that the true explanation of the confiscating proclamation is, that the gross iniquities and complications, caused by the land settlement of Oude directed by Lord Dalhousie, were such as could never have been set aside by a measure of less com-

* *Oude Blue Book*, p. 259—260.



prehensive operation. Lord Canning's answer perhaps implies as much; but why was it not more plainly stated? Reticence on this and other subjects has carried respect for the late Governor-General to a mischievous and misleading extent.

I believe that Lord Canning must have been sadly misinformed when he stated in the despatch from which I have so often quoted,* that only "a few" of the Talookdars were "representatives of ancient families," and that "the majority" were interlopers, who by favour at Court, or by the abuse of their official authority, had taken possession of land to the exclusion and deprivation of the village proprietors. There has been a Mussulman monarch in Oude for a century and a quarter, and the Nazims, Chuckladars, and other great revenue administrators, with few exceptions, have always been Mahomedans; but the vast majority of Talookdars and other landholders are Hindoos, while many of those who are Mussulmen, betray, by retaining the title of Rajah, their Hindoo origin and ancient importance, and their comparatively recent subjection and conversion. But we have an unexceptionable witness on this point in Mr. Gubbins, no friend to these "oppressive middlemen," who says:—"These Talookdars varied greatly in their origin. Some, *and the greater*

* Paragraph 24.



number, were hereditary heads of Rajpoot tribes settled in the neighbourhood. Others, again, were new families, sprung from some Government official, whose local authority had enabled him to acquire a holding of this description."

I consider the Talookdars to be properly described as the lords of the soil, and the Barons of Oude ; the greater number of them, as Mr. Gubbins tells us, were hereditary Rajpoot chiefs ; and in whatever rude fashion some or all of them may have acquired their estates, they were in legal possession when we entered on the government of that country.

But they were oppressive and tyrannical, and turbulent, and ground down their tenants and the labouring population. I suspect there is a good deal of truth in these charges ; and that the Barons of Oude, the feudatories and vassals of a weak government, were not quite exempt from the faults and failings of the feudal Barons of Germany and England. Does not the history of these two European countries teach us that some centuries must elapse before the great landlords can divest themselves of the power, and the supposed right, to do what they like with their own ? And yet the work that has been accomplished by these feudal oppressors and their descendants, has not been entirely noxious, or selfish, or exclusive. But of course it is very different with Asiatics,—“ niggers.” That I allow.



It is a singular fact, however, that a search in the Oude Blue-book discloses a tremendous list of charges against the King and his ministers, and his judges, and his collectors of revenue, but scarcely any against the Talookdars. The minor members of the class are said to be among the oppressed and not among the oppressors. And the more powerful landlords are represented as being ambitious and turbulent, frequently fighting among themselves and resisting the Government, but protecting their tenants and dependents. One of them in particular, who is repeatedly mentioned in the Oude Blue-books as one of the worst of his order, "a remarkable tyrant," a new man also, really an interloper. Durshun Sing (father of Rajah Maun Sing, who has played an ambiguous though not an unskilful part during the rebellion,) is held up as an example of the benefit conferred upon the poor ryots by their being removed from the immediate superintendence of the King's official collectors, and handed over to a Talookdar or great landlord.

"It may be curious to compare the acts of the most celebrated Nazims under the *izarah* and the *amance* systems. We will choose Rajah Durshun Sing, and Agaie Alee Khan.

"Rajah Durshun Sing taxed in equal proportions rich and poor.

"Agaie fears the one and ruins the other.



"Durshun Sing was the sworn enemy to dacoits and thieves.

"Agaie has ever spared them.

"Durshun Sing made for himself by oppression, a vast estate, styled the Bairamah, yielding from five to six lakhs ; *but ruled it with the utmost leniency.*

"Agaie, instead of seizing on lands, seized on hard cash.

"Durshun Sing, though a tyrant to all powerful Zemindars, was, as Nazim, *kind to the poor, and ever protected the ryot* ; and above all was true to his word in most instances.

"The very contrary may be said of Agaie.

"Durshun Sing, in all his innumerable '*dours*,' or expeditions, shared the fatigues of the commonest soldier.

"The very reverse may be mentioned of Agaie."*

And from the same source is taken the following description of another person of the same class, also an interloper and usurper to some extent, Ramdut Pandey :—"He does much good, and is more generally esteemed than any other man in the district ; but he has, no doubt, enlarged his own landed possessions occasionally, by taking advantage of the necessities of his clients, and his influence over the local authorities of Government. The lands he does

* *Oude Blue Book*, p. 71—72.



get, however, he improves, by protecting and aiding his tenants, and inviting and fostering a better class of cultivators. He is looked up to with respect and confidence by almost all the large landholders of the district."

One cannot help having some doubts whether these usurping oppressors are not rather more useful and important in their generation than the "occupants of the soil" and "village coparceners," so much favoured by Lord Dalhousie and his North-West officials.



LETTER XVI.

HINDOO HONESTY.

IN some highly experienced and distinguished quarters it would be considered an imaginary case, almost too absurd for serious discussion, if any one were to suggest that a few of the chieftains and nobles of Oude and other parts of India, may perhaps have been liberal landlords and useful members of society. Indeed, if we were to place our trust in the current expression of Anglo-Indian ideas,—as manifested in the conversation of society, in a great part of the local press, in the general structure of our administration, and in the published minutes of Government during Lord Dalhousie's rule,—we should be impressed with the belief that no native is a good member of society, whatever his sphere may be—unless it be that of a ploughman or artisan—that all native bankers and traders are extortioners and cheats; that native judges always sell their decisions to the highest bidder; that native sovereigns are invariably debauched and avaricious tyrants; and that their ministers and courtiers are mere parasites, “devouring the revenues of the country and fattening on corruption.”*

* These elegant expressions are taken from one of Lord Dalhousie's minutes.



I do *not* believe that these notions are shared by more than a very small minority of the real Governors of India, the thinking Englishmen of the present day, but I know that these notions do prevail extensively among the great unthinking majority of Europeans in India, who are much more demonstrative in their expression of opinions, and who by the very force of numbers impress the natives with the idea that they have nothing to expect from their foreign rulers but ill-disguised contempt and dislike.

I shall not attempt to estimate how much of the anger, disgust, and horror, so often experienced and expressed by persons who have had a long official intercourse with natives, is founded on just and reasonable grounds, and how much arises from the pride and antipathy of race, and the impatience of irresponsible power. I will but remind my readers that it is the easiest thing in the world to be angry with vice and sin, that the greatest offenders are indignant at the faults of others, and that the feeling of indignation is merely spontaneous, instinctive, chiklish, and totally barren, and devoid of all moral effect either within or without. Nothing whatever can be gained or hoped from the wholesale abuse of a pupil race, over whose manners and morals we can never hope to gain a powerful influence without sympathy and love, and whom we can only raise by



first raising their self-respect. Never despair of human nature ! Recognise humanity in the Hindoo.

On the grave moral evil of this prevalent want of sympathy I shall not for the present expatiate, taking for granted that no one will gravely venture to justify or to extenuate English pride and impatience by pointing to native selfishness, indifference, and apathy. If we are to measure our conduct by the native standard, and to be contented if we excel them by an inch ; if we Anglo-Saxons are not here as masters, as teachers, and superiors, to rule with temper, with charity, and with *love*, then indeed India will be held by the sword, and by the sword only. And although it may last my time, and my grandson's time, it is not difficult to see that the end of such an empire will be with the sword also.

But before reviewing the question in its more serious aspect, I shall endeavour to show by some familiar examples, which I believe will come home to many a man's conscience and memory, how apt we are summarily to condemn a particular class for some enormity asserted or implied to be peculiar to Hindoos, and to form a striking contrast with the behaviour of the corresponding class in Europe. How indignant we are, how we vituperate the native character on discovering some petty pilfering or embezzlement on the part of our domestic servants ! Surely the lamentations of English housekeepers



regarding the marvellous consumption of tallow candles, and the expansion of "kitchen stuff," the necessity of locking the tea-caddy, and keeping a key for the beer barrel, must be pleasant jests; and the complaints of bachelors against lodging-house keepers for levying black mail on their coals and cold meat, were never heard of before the performance of the farce of *Box and Cox*, and have no existence except in its scenes. Spoons never disappear mysteriously except in India; and what is professionally called "a put up" robbery may have been heard of in London, where foreign servants are kept, but never otherwise. Courvoisier was a Swiss.

Did you ever hear the traveller by dawd launch out upon the marvellous, incredible rapacity and ingratitude of palanquin bearers, and the impossibility of satisfying them or eliciting a word of thanks by any amount of liberality? Yes, you have; and you know how some moral philosopher (whose name I forget) applied the *Experimentum crucis* by giving his bearers exactly three times their fare, which was sulkily received, and a request for two sheep preferred. But still methinks some rumour has reached me of a being in a remote island, whose favour no offerings can propitiate, (except his exact fare, the ceremony of "taking his number" being simultaneously performed,) and who, unlike the humble bearer, often enforces his unjust



demand with railing and sarcasm, particularly when he can get a lady into a quiet street. Shall I name the London cabman? I beg to remark that my experience of his nature is not drawn merely from the pages of *Punch*: I *have* been home on furlough.

But what shall we say of that personification of all that is griping, greedy, grasping, extortionate, cruel, fraudulent and hypocritical, the Hindoo Soucar? Well, I don't know how we should get on without him. He deals in money, a ticklish commodity; and he must try to make a profit on every transaction, whether it be cashing an order or granting a hoondie, or else he can't carry on his business long. The sources of his gains, the style and spirit of his transactions, are not very different from those of English bankers and brokers, while his credit and repute in both these capacities will be found to be not inconsiderable. But how as a money lender? The ordinary interest of money in India is high,—there are many sufficient causes for it,—and if superficial young gentlemen imagine that the Soucar is never in straits himself, or at least that he never has been,—that all his life he has been a lender and never a borrower,—then young gentlemen are very much mistaken. However, there is no doubt that our friend knows what four, three, and two per cent. per mensem are, and prefers four to two when he can get it; he knows the virtue of



stamped paper, he loves good security, and he knows how much he can recover from military persons in a Court of Requests, and what interest that Court will allow. Consequently he has learned how to extract something additional under the name of premium or commission, or some equally significant word. He deducts the interest in advance upon the whole sum borrowed—oh, we know all about that. But there is *one* European refinement that has not, as far as I have heard, yet found its way into the Soucar's business. The London money-lender (not always of the Hebrew race) charges premium and commission, and deducts the interest beforehand also; but the Hindoo at least gives cash, he has not yet hit upon the plan of giving half in money and half in paving stones, port wine or pictures.

But has the Soucar himself nothing to say regarding the borrowers? Does he run no risks? Is there not an Insolvent Court? Did he not once cash a large bill on Aldgate Pump and Co., London? Did not Tom Danshunner write to say that he was going to settle with all his creditors at Calcutta, and then dawd down to Bombay and embark there after all; and three months after sell out and retire on his pension at home? *"And I must say I*

* I know one who did so.



do like to hear of a Soucar being done occasionally;" is the style of remark that is usually called forth by sharp practice of this description.

Now what do I mean by all this? I will tell you. I *don't* mean to say that the moral character of the natives of India is as high as that of Englishmen; I don't mean to say the class of native servants, of bearers, or of Soucars is as enlightened, as honest, or as honourable as the class of English servants, cabmen, or bankers, but what I do mean to say is this, that the prevailing characteristics of the classes in both countries are the same, that there is nothing abnormally or singularly base or bad to be seen in the one country which will not be seen in the other, and that there is no actual or possible good quality in the Englishman which is not either actual or possible in the Hindoo. In short, the natives of India are human beings of like passions and intellect with ourselves, but degraded and depressed by centuries of foreign invasion, war and tyranny, by the anti-social laws of caste, and the effects of a ferocious though fascinating superstition. It is sympathy that is necessary both to educe and to render visible and sensible the good and beautiful feelings that exist among the native of India; and a kind word and gracious manner will do more towards creating confidence, truth, and gratitude, than will the contemptuous bestowal of myriads of rupees,



shillings, or sheep. These are truisms to which all will subscribe, but we must learn to make them living and operative truths, or our mission in India will never be performed. Those who will open their eyes and their hearts will find no lack in this world of honest and grateful servants, reasonable and civil cabmen and bearers, and even generous Soucars and bankers.



LETTER XVII.

EDUCATION OF THE NATIVES.

THE second century of our Indian Empire is commencing,—a new century and a new era. We have had many a hard task to perform; for years we struggled for existence, and at more than one momentous epoch our footing has appeared precarious. We have crushed many giant dangers, abolished some horrible customs, and inaugurated some brilliant reforms. We are perhaps entitled to an amnesty and full acquittance for the past. But year by year the development of the resources, and the social and moral improvement of India, have called more and more urgently for the direct aid and influence of the natives themselves. We have excluded them from power hitherto; and now our reforms are at a stand-still, and the reputation of our Government endangered for want of them. The Empire requires vitalization. A profound distrust in the good faith of their foreign rulers has been widely spread, and deeply implanted among the natives of India, by the destructive policy of the last ten years; and the belief has become general that we are intent upon reaping all the fruit of their fertile



plains, and leaving them nothing but the stubble and the husks. To re-establish a healthy community of interest and feeling, to enlighten and give moral weight both to the legislative and to the executive power,—the direct aid, the public countenance and co-operation of influential natives are required, and cannot be dispensed with much longer. Let us lose no time in opening the door for the admittance of *qualified* persons from among this intelligent, docile, and laborious people, to a share in the government of their own country.° Thus alone can human relations be re-established between the two races; thus alone can a deadly blow be struck at Hindoo superstition and Hindoo stagnation.

I am not an advocate for *less*, but for *more* interference with the customs and prejudices of the natives. If in the proper sphere of legislation, which must be duly defined and circumscribed, obstructions and difficulties and great social wrongs are presented for removal and redress, the work must be fearlessly performed. But this work cannot be either planned in a just and practicable manner, or carried into execution safely and effectually, without accurate information from native experience, and moral support from the agreement and example of influential natives. Even the flagrant and intolerable horrors of Suttee and infanticide were cautiously and timidly assailed by us, and were not abolished and penally



forbidden, until by arguments drawn from Hindoo religious books and favourable opinions derived from Hindoo Pundits, we had made the idea of abolition familiar throughout the country, and enlisted a considerable party on our side. But if our Government of India is to be really progressive, and not actually to lag behind enlightened native requirements, we ought to be prepared within a few years to take up such subjects,—difficult and delicate, and yet unavoidable,—as, for instance, those of polygamy and religious mendicancy. I do not think that such questions can with justice be disturbed to any extent, I do not think they can safely be touched, and I am sure they cannot be solidly or satisfactorily disposed of, until we can bring a very considerable and conspicuous force of native intelligence to bear upon them in our Council and in our administration.

Unfortunately there are still some persons who are not entirely devoid of influence and of pretensions to be heard, who broadly declare that the natives belong to an inferior race, and are therefore unfit for high office; and some others who will not hear of natives being admitted to any position of power or influence until they are converted to Christianity. The ethnological question is much too extensive and too interesting to be treated in a few pointed and cursory sentences. The scale of intelligence of the Hindoo and Mussulman tribes who people India is undeniably so high, the literature,



the architecture, the laws, and the social economy they have created so admirable, that it is impossible to draw sweeping distinctions and comparisons to the discredit and condemnation of their right to compete with us on equal terms. Their claims and their qualifications and ours must be judged, for all imperial purposes, individually and not collectively. The Hindoos and Mahomedans of India may be an inferior race,—or there may be inferior tribes among them,—but every individual native is not inferior to every young Sparkler and every old Barnacle who occupies a lucrative place in the civil or military service.

Both the ethnological and the religious objections smell most foully of blood; and, if they were well-founded, would be incapable of being settled in any way except by fire and sword, and, if pushed to their logical conclusions, *ought* to be upheld by those means. It has often been irresistibly demonstrated that if Government is justified in excluding the professors of a particular faith from office, or from any of the privileges of a citizen, and still more, if Government is justified in using its supreme authority and the material means at its disposal,—as, for instance, the money raised by taxes,—for the support of a particular religion, and especially for the propagation of that particular religion, then there is no possible logical ground for denying that Government is justified in propagating that religion by all convenient force, and in punishing apostacy and heresy



by due and sufficient penalties. The slightest patronage of a particular creed by Government, either involves a succession of inconsistencies and contradictions, or leads to a stern and consistent system of sectarian supremacy and persecution.

It is not among the functions or duties of Government to teach religion, or to teach anything. Government does but meddle and mar when it professes to educate or to assist in education. It is the duty of Government to protect life and property, to enforce contracts, and to offer a fair field and no favour to all loyal subjects.

Undoubtedly it is the mission and the duty of the British nation to civilize and to teach our Asiatic brethren, and it will suffer the penalties of its neglect, if that duty is not assisted and advanced by every Briton to whom the power and the opportunity falls; but the Government cannot do our work, it can only mar it, and retard it.

If a fair field to educated natives be opened by the Government, the best men will educate themselves; education will be truly popular; and there will be a kindly and human feeling of obligations conferred and received between the races. No person, no people ever felt grateful or obliged to such an abstraction as Government. Its gifts are looked upon with suspicion, especially its gifts of religion or education, and this suspicion must be immensely aggravated when the



rulers are of a different race, colour, and creed from the subjects. But in India we know that these suspicions exist in their most dangerous and unmanageable forms. All these great measures of social reform and public decency to which I have alluded must be abandoned, and had better not be proposed or mentioned, if the Government of India is to be self-exposed to the suspicion of aiming at the propagation or the encouragement of the Christian religion. The introduction of Bible classes in the schools supported by the State would be a most fatal and retrogressive step; but in my humble opinion any connexion between the Government and education must hamper the progress of reform by rendering education unpopular, and by discouraging private efforts and national self-reliance.

And although not thoroughly accepted in Europe, these opinions certainly represent the general tendency of the most cultivated and advanced thought on these topics; and it is a most hopeful fact that Lord Stanley appears, by his late answer to a deputation from the Missionary Societies, to have accepted the doctrine of the strict religious neutrality of the State without reserve. I wish he would go a step farther, and accept the non-interference of the State in educational efforts also.

Let the missionaries work, and let all good Christians second their exertions. If by any human means the natives of India are to be converted to



Christianity, they will convert themselves, and will pay for their own missionaries, as well as for their own schoolmasters, when the proper time arrives. That time cannot be hastened by one day by any act or by any policy of the State.

Can any one seriously expect that the conversion of the natives will be rendered more complete or more rapid by their intermediate proscription and exclusion from the government of their own country, and from all high and honourable office in its administration? And have we any right from history and experience to believe that their moral cure would be as speedy and as complete by their conversion to Christianity as might be hoped, and as theoretically it ought to be? The Christian standard of rectitude in 1358 is very high. But our English judges were corrupt, our English landlords were oppressive for many centuries after they were Christian.

Let the British nation according to its convictions, and every individual according to his lights and his obligations, promote education and religion; but let the Government be confined to its legitimate functions.

But it is possible to err in the other extreme. It is painful and disheartening to hear certain statesmen, from some of whom we might have hoped better things, enunciating the doctrine, opposed alike to humanity and to expediency even on selfish principles, that education in India would be dangerous



to our supremacy, and repeating the savage, stupid cry, "India was won by the sword, and must be kept by the sword." If prophets abounded in these days, and such words were uttered by some inspired sibyl, or some venerable sage to whom "the sunset of life gave mystical lore," we should hear in them a prediction of judicial blindness and of terrible punishment, of carnage, torture and hell upon earth, the only possible results, however long delayed, of such unworthy and stupid injustice and ingratitude. But as our wildest as well as our most oracular politicians are but mortal men, and their loudest effusions are not in general accredited with any Pythian significance, let us draw no bad omen from their defiance of humanity, but hope the contagion has not extended very far. Do these statesmen imagine that "with the sword" they can make a world after their own fashion, and a human race with stunted minds and seared sensibilities, to suit their own purposes, their own purblind blundering purposes? We know that similar fears were formerly expressed with regard to the education of the English working classes, but one seldom now hears any one broach such stale, flat, and unprofitable bigotry. Unprofitable indeed! for it is well known now that the working classes *will* be educated, whether some nobles and employers approve of education or not; and that the only way in which the



higher classes can obtain any voice in the matter at all is by joining in the good work.

The American slaveholders forbid their slaves to be taught to read ; and any deprecation, obstruction, or discouragement of education in India would obviously be based on the same principle, or want of principle. And why are we to manifest the guilty fear of the unfortunate possessors of that fatal inheritance ? Why should we play the slaveholder's part with a people who are not slaves, and who would receive any generous gift from us with the most loyal affection and gratitude ? Let us not begrudge the gift ; let us not misunderstand or slight the true community of interests between the giver and receiver. Nobly and sweetly sings the greatest poetess that ever lived in England, and one of the greatest of living poets :—

“ How to our races we may justify

Our individual claims, and as we reach

Our own grapes, bend the top-vines to supply

The children's uses : how to fill a breach

With olive branches : how to quench a lie

With truth, and smite a foe upon the cheek

With Christ's most conquering kiss ! why these were things

Worth a great nation's finding, to prove weak

The glorious arms of Military Kings.”*

Is there no guarantee for the future in the absence of all laws suppressing the free publication and inter-

* Mrs. Browning—Casa Guidi Windows.



change of counsel and opinion, and in the inestimable institution of a free press, that elastic safety-valve to which England owes her present security from the rude tyranny of physical force by either people or Government? It is maintained by many, with much appearance of reason and with much warrant from experience, that a nation requires to be accustomed gradually and trained to the safe use of such powerful means of swaying public opinion and influencing its rulers; but here is a nation, here is India, absolutely being brought up from childhood in the possession of this power, of the nature, value, and extent of which she is at present absolutely unconscious, and which she certainly will not be able to use with effect until a long apprenticeship has taught its legitimate and prudent employment. A people may misuse a privilege snatched by force, or thrown as a sop to quench their rage; but when the free press is an institution of slow and natural growth, it will be at once an honest informant and instructor for rulers and subjects, and a safety-valve to disgorge and dissipate all that violence, falsehood and folly, which flourish best in forced concealment and under heavy coercive pressure, fretting, swelling, growing, gaining strength for the inevitable explosion at last. The Government which forbids the publication of foolish or mischievous opinions, forbids their exposure and destruction.



LETTER XVIII.

HOW INDIA MUST BE GOVERNED.

INDIA must be governed on British principles, as a part of the British Empire, and not as a conquered foreign country, the home of an inferior race. We did not gain our vast possessions and virtual supremacy by conquest, in opposition to the will of the inhabitants. From 1799 to 1819, though some of the princes were jealous and alarmed at our progress, public opinion was very generally and decidedly in our favour. Our only opponents in the acquisition of those vast provinces which constitute the Madras Presidency were the French, Hyder Ali, and his son Tippoo Sultan. I will even consent to set aside our own native troops as mere unthinking, ignorant mercenaries,—though, perhaps, the events of 1857-58 might teach a different lesson,—but in the invasion of Mysore, one of our most critical campaigns, which terminated in the storm of Seringapatam and death of Tippoo, our army was strengthened by twenty thousand native allies. In the Assaye and Argaum campaign, General Wellesley had 5000 of the Nizam's Cavalry, and 4000 of the Peishwa's troops under his orders, whose services against the Bhonsla's and



Scindiah's swarms of Mahratta horsemen were invaluable. In 1817-18 the Peishwa Bajee Rao,—stained with the blood of Gungadhur Shastree, a Brahmin, a guest and an ambassador,—and Appah Sahib of Nagpore, who had treacherously murdered Rajah Pursojee, his cousin and sovereign, were our two principal enemies. Both of them were regarded with horror and detestation on account of these crimes, and both of them—more especially Bajee Rao—had completely lost the confidence and alienated the affections of their most powerful officers and dependents, by their infamous profligacy, their cruel exactions, their cowardice and vacillation. Public opinion all over India was on our side; and these two monarchs met with but little support even in their own families. The ban of our Empire was respected then. But between 1846 and 1856 our reputation retrograded, and our power was not increased.

In the year 1856 we did not hold the lofty moral position, the credit of disinterested and impartial motives, that we ought to have attained, before we decided on such a step as the annexation of the kingdom of Oude. To perform such an act with the high hand, we ought to have had clean hands: and had our past dealings with other allied and protected States been void of reproach, I believe that—excepting some objectionable details, such as auction sales of royal property—the public opinion of India



would have supported and approved our policy. The plea upon which the kingdom was mediatized, if not by the general law of nations and by the terms of treaties a sound and sufficient plea, was at least a true one: the misgovernment, or rather no-government was notorious and scandalous,—life and property were not secure. But we were not entitled, either by universal acknowledgment of the blessings of British rule, and any marked contrast of its superiority in our adjacent districts, or by any complaint or appeal for redress and protection from any class of the inhabitants of Oude, to use our overwhelming power for the extinction of that friendly and faithful sovereignty. And our previous and recent annexations, on very much weaker pleas, of Sattara, Nagpore, Jaloun and Thansi, caused our professed and proclaimed anxiety for the ryots of Oude to be received all over India with contempt and derision. But no sensible person who has “been in India,” cares what the niggers think; in fact, distinguished and experienced officers know that there is no public opinion in India, that the niggers don’t think.

Lord Dalhousie disposed of boxes of despatches and reports in rare workmanlike fashion; he was a perfect master of the system of administration and of a vast quantity of details; he was always up to time, and made every one keep pace with himself: he had a singular facility, if not always felicity, in



writing minutes. But he did not know the grand imperial style; he made the ban of our Empire cheap by threatening our best friends with it; and he made our supremacy dreadful and hateful by annexing at least three principalities and declaring the extinction of at least three illustrious families on false pleas.*

Yes,—on false grounds were Sattara, Nagpore, and Jhansi annexed;—in the particular case of Nagpore, on grounds so false that the whole transaction might well be considered as null and void. The persons most nearly interested, the widows of the late Rajah, have never ceased to protest against it, and to declare it null and void, to the best of their poor ability. In pleading their own cause, their great difficulty has always been that they have never heard what adverse case, what objections of fact or law are set up against them. Lord Dalhousie told them roundly enough that there was no heir; but they know that there is an heir, the grand-nephew of the late Rajah, the great-great-grandson of Rughojee the Second, who fought against us at Assaye and Argaum, and paid dearly for three months' hostility by the cession of Cuttack and Bevar. In conse-

* There are other cases, but I mention the three which I have thoroughly investigated.



quence of this young prince's inherent right of succession by consanguinity, he was, according to Hindoo and family custom, chosen as a son, adopted by the widowed Ranees on the day of the Rajah's death, and officiated as a son at the funeral pile. Yet Lord Dalhousie, in his farewell minute of review, dated 28th February, 1856, paragraph fourteen, writes as follows:—"No son had been born to his Highness" (the Rajah of Nagpore), "none was adopted by him; none, as they have themselves admitted, was adopted at the Rajah's death by the Ranees, his widows." This statement is peculiarly and mysteriously erroneous; it seems impossible to explain its occurrence in a paper written by Lord Dalhousie; for so far from admitting anything of the sort, the Ranees have never ceased to press the claims of their adopted son upon the Government. It is true that the public processions through the city and other ceremonies of adoption, and of giving a new name to their son, were postponed by the Ranees,—at first because with somewhat overstrained deference to our Government they did not wish to take the initiative out of its hands, and afterwards because, until two years had elapsed, the local authorities actually prohibited the public celebration, probably from some fear of a disturbance in the city of Nagpore,—but most unquestionably Janojee Bhonsla was adopted by the Ranees, in the plain obvious meaning of the



word, chosen as a son on the day of the Rajah, his grand-uncle's death.

I have said that the plea upon which Oude was annexed was a true one, but that the plea upon which Sattara, Nagpore, and Jhansi were confiscated was false. But I am very far from believing that the misgovernment and extravagance of the Court of Lucknow, and the solicitude of the Honourable Company for the welfare of the ryots of Oude, were the pure and sole considerations and inducements that led to the appropriation of that rich and flourishing province, the revenue of which was computed at nearly a million and a half sterling per annum. And I certainly do not assert, or insinuate, or suspect that Lord Dalhousie and the eminent gentlemen associated with him in Council, were conscious of the falsity and iniquity of that pretended "law and custom of India," under which the Honourable Company, setting the law of the land and history and treaties at defiance, refused to recognise the succession of adopted sons in the families of its faithful allies of Sattara, Jhansi, and Nagpore. Jeremiah tells us that the human heart is "deceitful above all things;" and all experience teaches that the corporate heart of councils, whether in India or in Europe, is not exempt from the frailties to which the individual is liable; if indeed self-deceit be not aggravated by the absence or division of responsi-



bility.* I have no doubt that Lord Dalhousie's intentions were excellent; that his lordship and the members of council, and the Court of Directors, had no objects in view but the general good of the British Empire and the good government of the inhabitants of these newly-annexed provinces; in short, that they all deceived themselves most sincerely and effectually; but unfortunately they did not and could not deceive the people of India. Native principles, native traditions, native prejudices, were systematically neglected and despised; native public opinion was either treated as utterly unworthy of notice and attention, or declared to have no existence; until at last, when forty years of Mr. Gubbins and the North-West Settlement, and ten years of active annexation, resumption, and confiscation, had ruined innumerable families of every rank, from the prince to the substantial gentleman, and beggared their retainers and servants, had shattered and shaken all conservative interests, feelings, and hopes, and filled the land with mourning, and curses, and threats,—then one day the storm arose and filled the land with blood and fire.

It took all distinguished and experienced officials

* Some one said that "corporations had neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned."



by surprise,—nobody had ever dreamed of such an event as a general mutiny of the army, as a widely-extended rebellion, except some few crotchety men, regular old croakers,—clever no doubt some of them, but queer in their notions,—such as Metcalfe, who set the press free, but was always an alarmist; and Frederick John Shore,* who seems to have really had some doubts about the blessings of British rule; and old Sleeman, who had the most exaggerated ideas of the native character and of natives' capabilities, though he ought to have known better, since it was he that discovered and hunted down the Thugs: and all these men had the same mischievous, old-fashioned opinions about the evils of annexation, and of destroying the old families, and about employing natives in the higher branches of the public service. But after all they did not foresee when the rebellion would happen, or how it would break out; it was merely a sort of guess, a vague idea they had picked up from some native or other, most probably disaffected people,—old Sleeman was always talking to natives, and always used to stick up for them in a most absurd way, as if they were gentlemen. So that really they did not know anything about it; nor

* Read his admirable book on Indian Affairs. J. W. Parker. 1837.



did they expect that a rebellion would break out so soon. And it is a most extraordinary fact that no one has found out how or where the plot began,—or whether indeed there was a plot. In fact, nobody can understand it,—from the very first day of the mutinies no one could account for them; and nothing can account for the rebellion to this day, except Russian intrigue, or Persian agency, or a Mussulman conspiracy, or the missionaries' operations, particularly Colonel Wheeler's preaching, or the lax discipline of the army, or a licentious press,—or perhaps, after all, it *was* that stupid oversight of the greased cartridge,—or a little of all these causes combined. But the great secret, and the true fundamental explanation of the outbreak and of the horrors which distinguished it, is the truly diabolical Oriental character, which assumes the vilest and lowest type in the races of Hindostan. The truth is that Asiatics, and particularly Hindoos, are only to be governed through fear, the most abject fear; once release them in the slightest degree from that restraint, and they become perfect demons, they revel in blood, and in the indulgence of the most infernal passions. Why—every one knows that, if we consider their disposition even in times of peace, and among the most respectable class, no native is capable of feeling gratitude; even among themselves you never hear of one native being grateful to



another. They only act under two motives, self-interest and fear; and although of course it is very proper for the missionaries to go on, and we ought all to subscribe to their schools and so forth, still I doubt very much whether they will ever do any good. What can you expect from a people who can't feel any gratitude for anything, who positively don't know what gratitude means? And it is of no use, indeed it is positively dangerous, to show them any kindness, because they directly interpret it into fear. That was the way with the sepoys; they were kindly treated, and they thought we were afraid of them. The fact is, that it is quite impossible to calculate on the actions of Asiatics; they are cowardly and yet ferocious; they have no reasoning powers, but a great deal of low cunning; they are just like very wicked children, and they must be treated like wicked, dangerous, mischievous children. The only plan now is to take such precautions that they may never have such a chance of again catching us un-awares. We shall not differ much about the precautions. In the first place, we must have an English army of a hundred thousand men, or eighty-five thousand at least; and all the artillery, which must be very largely augmented, must be European,—no native must be made an artilleryman, or admitted into our arsenals or laboratories; then we must have fortified gaols, and strong posts with guns wherever



more than two English officers are on duty, for instance, at all civil stations; and we must disarm the whole country, and make the manufacture and sale of gunpowder felony; and if any native army is to be kept up it should be composed of Sikhs and sweepers in equal proportions, and armed with flint muskets; and the commandants of native corps should have the power of flogging, shooting, and hanging, without any nonsense of court-martial; and the pay of European officers ought to be raised; and the half batta order ought to be done away with at once; and we ought to have forty or fifty battalions of negroes, or Kroomen, or Malays, or Kaffirs, and a few Italian or Spanish legions, half-caste cavalry, volunteer guards, militia, military colonies in the Hills, &c. &c. But above all, there should be none of that conciliation policy, no truckling to those wretched upstart Baboos, who would cut our throats if they could; it is the worst policy possible to try to conciliate the natives, they only believe that we are afraid of them, and they see their advantage at once, and ask for more. We ought to insist on proper respect being paid to all Europeans; every native, whatever his pretended rank may be, ought to be compelled under heavy penalties to salaam all English gentlemen in the streets, and if the native is on horseback or in a carriage, to dismount and stand in a respectful atti-



tude until the European has passed him.* Anything more?

I confess I do not rise in a very hopeful state of mind after reading or hearing speculations and recommendations of this nature. I do not recognise the voice of my countrymen there. Yet the very words are ringing in my ears day after day. I think they will require no comment or refutation in England.

* I regret to say that a magistrate at Agra disgraced himself and his nation by publishing a police regulation to this effect and trying to enforce it.



LETTER XIX.

INDIAN STATESMANSHIP.

December, 1858.

IN my last letter I expressed a confident opinion that the hopeless views of Asiatic character, and of the necessity of rule by fear, would not need much confutation in England, although in India they were painfully common and obtrusive.

I have become strongly disposed to think that, as a general rule, the field of Indian administration is the very worst training ground for Indian statesmanship. There is neither the time nor the space on the present occasion to discuss the origin and inherent cause of the deficiencies of our distinguished and experienced officers. Perhaps we might be able to trace them to the imperfect education, the scanty English intercourse, the premature authority and immediate caste distinctions, of gentlemen in the civil and military services, who arrive in India at ages varying from seventeen to twenty. Perhaps a purely official life never is the best sphere for learning the art of government, and for acquiring enlarged ideas. Even in England, I doubt whether twenty years' experience as County-Court Judge, or as Excise Commissioner, would be a good introduction to a seat



in the Cabinet. I suspect there is not a single instance on record in which a Sous-Préfet, however long in the service and however dexterous at his work, has attained to the dignity of a portfolio, or has been supposed capable of holding one. And I fear that an Indian Collector, whose duties are very similar to those of a French Préfet, is seldom fit to be a Pro-Consul.

There have been brilliant exceptions; but I believe that recent and contemporary history will be found to confirm this rule. Sir John Lawrence's vigour and skill as administrator of the Punjab were sufficiently conspicuous for many years before 1857, when the rebellion, and especially the siege of Delhi, called forth his marvellous energy and resource, and gave him the opportunity of rendering services to the Empire that cannot be over-estimated and will never be forgotten. His natural and acquired talents are just such as at once impress and attach the people of the country. He commands respect and obedience with a complete absence of English hauteur, and with much geniality and openness; and he never fails to recognise the due position by birth or by official rank of every native whom he receives as a visitor or on business. He is always accessible and always reliable; whatever he undertakes to do is done. Yet he is generally understood to take the North-West civilian view of revenue



matters, and to have, at least, offered no opposition in the Punjab to Lord Dalhousie's mania for resuming estates and dealing directly with the occupants of the soil;* and to prefer and uphold the arbitrary, stealthy "Non-Regulation" system, by which administrative, police, and judicial functions are concentrated and confounded in the hands of every official. And lately, while firmly though mildly deprecating the violent proposals of his gallant coadjutor, Colonel Edwardes, he has advocated the introduction of Bible classes in Government schools, and the prohibition of religious processions,—which he calls a mere regulation of police. These two recommendations appear to me retrogressive and unprincipled, incompatible with imperial duties and with a just and consistent policy, and tend to confirm the truth of my surmise that a great administrator, and especially a great Indian administrator, is very liable to become a narrow-minded statesman.

* The following passages, extracted from the Second Punjab Report, disclose the nature of the "settlement" which took place during the first year or two after the abolition of the Board of Administration in February, 1853, of which Sir Henry Lawrence was the president, and indicate the extent of these operations. "Paragraph 490. In the year 1852-53 the receipts were as follows:—The land-tax exhibited a slight falling off, being 149½ lakhs," (1,497,500L.) "against 152" (1,520,000L.) "in the previous year. The out-turn, however, is more satisfactory than could have been expected, if the reductions granted



Sir Thomas Munro and Sir Henry Pottinger at Madras, Sir John Malcolm and Sir James Rivett Carnac at Bombay,—all of whom were men of talents far above the common order, and had been eminently useful public servants in the highest secondary offices,—have not made their periods of government memorable by any reform of importance or by any proposed reform; and, in fact, all of them quite disappointed public expectation. This is particularly remarkable

by the settlement then in progress be considered. Bardens, amounting to several lakhs, had been removed from the shoulders of the agriculturists, and yet the loss to the State had been disproportionally slight, *owing chiefly to the lapsing of jagheer estates.*" Page 205-6. "Paragraph 487. The item of Tribute amounts to upwards of five lakhs. A large portion of this is derived from the feudatories in the Cis-Sutlej States. *It will probably be decreased by lapses and resumptions*, which will, on the other hand, compensate by additions to the land-revenue." Page 203-4. "Paragraph 348. The statements referring to Lapses and Resumptions are not in all respects complete; it is hoped that the omissions will be rectified for the future. *There appear to have been 674 estates and 1097 minor tenures either lapsed or resumed.*" Page 137. Which I think may be considered a pretty good clearance of mere middlemen in one year!

It was understood at the time, has frequently been stated since, and, although the papers have not to my knowledge been published, has never been denied, that the cause of Sir Henry Lawrence's removal from the Punjaub, and of the abolition of the Board of Administration, was Sir Henry's persistent endeavours to save the landlords from extinction; upon which measure Lord Dalhousie was determined, and which Sir John, raised from member of the Board to be Chief Commissioner, carried into effect.



with reference to Munro and Malcolm, whose previous careers had been so brilliant, and whose recorded opinions on many subjects are so liberal and enlightened.

Lord Teignmouth was an indifferent if not a weak Viceroy. Mr. Thomason, the late Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, was nothing but a big Collector.

Mountstuart Elphinstone and Lord Metcalfe seem to me to be the only two statesmen that the Indian services have produced during this century; and the latter, though always known and noted as an able man, was, on account of his essential differences from civilian orthodoxy, decidedly distrusted and depreciated by his order, and by the civilian Court of Directors, who at last virtually discarded him as altogether unfit to be Governor-General.

On the other hand, Lord Cornwallis, the author of the Perpetual Zemindarce settlement of Bengal,—who both in that great measure and in his less known and more imperfectly established judicial scheme, evinced at once the wisest conservatism, and the broadest liberality,—has never been a favourite with the high official class of Anglo-Indians. On the contrary, a few attempts, more or less bold, and many proposals have been made by them to disturb the constitution of Bengal; and Lord Cornwallis is generally spoken of as a well-intentioned, but highly injudicious ruler, who under some visionary notions



of a landed aristocracy and a happy tenantry, hastily committed the Government to a most unprofitable bargain, and converted mere middlemen into owners.

At last came Lord Dalhousie,—the first Governor-General who openly avowed and relentlessly practised a policy of annexation among our allies, and of revolutionary confiscation among the nobles and landlords of the country. In his eight laborious years of power he threw us back fifty years in reputation; and an utter despair of justice and even of a fair hearing in matters connected with acquisitions of territory and revenue became established throughout the land. Yet he and the rebellion—which followed his departure so closely, and in which his name and his acts were so often mentioned by the rebel-leaders,*—were wanted. A generation had grown up and was planted in every position of authority and influence, which, calm and self-complacent, believed in its own infallibility, in the inherent and necessary subserviency of the natives, and in the eternity and omnipotence of the regulations and monthly returns. Lord Dalhousie was the civilians' beautiful ideal of a Governor-General realized, a Viceroy in their own shape, a covenanted Avatar, their Ormuzd,

* The Nana Sahib Khan, Bahadoor Khan, and the Ranees of Jhansi.



as Lord Ellenborough had been their Ahriman. He came to push the theory of Asiatic inferiority—a low type of mind and morals entailing an inferiority of rights,—to its climax. This theory—otherwise called the damned nigger system—is in origin and principle, if not in degree, identical with the theory by which modern American slave-owners defend their “domestic institution.” But in India there has been generally more self-deception in its adoption, much more disguise and reticence in its avowal: instead of appearing in its true deformity as the selfish arrogance of race, it was tricked out as anxiety for the interests of the ryots, the under-tenants, and the lower classes of suitors in the Courts; delay was advocated, and total proscription disavowed, hopes were expressed that the progress of education and of Christian principles might in time render natives eligible for positions of trust, and so forth. The patient was dumb, the doctors blind, and the disease so deep-seated that nothing but violent inflammation could bring it to the surface.

In settled times, with an independent Council and a watchful, well-informed public opinion to keep him in the right path, Lord Dalhousie might have been an efficient Governor. There cannot be a question of his talents and application, but they were the qualities of an administrator, not of a statesman. He was far too able and too self-reliant to be led by



his Secretariat or by his colleagues in Council ; but all his mental predilections and moral tendencies fell in with the cold-hearted mechanical bureaucracy of Calcutta. He seems never to have had an original thought ; in all his innumerable minutes not a single great principle, not a single word of generous faith or genial hope enlivens the dreary waste. He is no example of an English statesman ; he never acted, and never professed to act, on English principles.

Lord Canning has yet to manifest the faculties, and to win the fame of a great ruler. We have had but little earnest of the great remedial measures which are to restore the moral and material reputation of the British Empire, and to make Queen Victoria's supremacy not only credible, but acceptable throughout India. Since the first outbreak of the rebellion, military questions have been exclusively engrossing ; and such a time is altogether unsuited for marked concessions and changes. But it is earnestly to be hoped that the precious and critical days of our conspicuous and undisputed power and triumph will not be lost. Until peace is completely restored it would be premature to hint or to entertain a doubt : the simple fact, however, of no reforms having yet been instituted or publicly proposed, must be noted here to prevent future misconceptions.



But with the exception of the Press Restriction Act,—which his lordship is generally understood to have reluctantly introduced in deference to the unanimous recommendations of the Council and of every adviser at Calcutta,—I do not know of any mistake of consequence with which Lord Canning is justly chargeable during the two years of rebellion; while we have many reasons to be proud and thankful that an English nobleman was at the head of the Indian Government, and not any distinguished and experienced servant of the Company. But few of that class were uninfected by the diseased and untutored, though not unnatural public opinion, which, maddened by the horrors of Cawnpore and Jhansi, called for all but indiscriminate slaughter. But few of them could approve, or appreciate, or comprehend the dignified and judicial spirit in which, from the first, the English statesman surveyed the whole scene, and weighed all its consequences,—conscious that he could not give way with impunity to the passions of the hour, conscious that he would be held answerable by his country and by posterity, for the general action of his Government, and for its remotest results.

Soon after our first success at Delhi, the conduct of many of the civilians in power created a belief, which was industriously fostered by the more determined insurgents, that our Government positively



intended to exterminate all men of rank throughout the country. The course of action pursued by many of those officers who, humiliated and exasperated hitherto, now found themselves armed with unlimited and irresponsible power,* was not calculated to restore confidence; and their severities led to the defection of many waverers, such as the Nawab of Banda, Tej Sing of Mynpoorie, Narrain Rao of Tirohan, and others who had not committed themselves before the siege of Delhi.† But few of the officers who were placed in charge of the re-occupied territories commenced steadily and firmly to act up to the tenor and spirit of the instructions which Lord Canning, the responsible ruler of the country, laid down for their guidance; and in several instances where information reached the Governor-General, their

* Under the special Acts XIV. and others of 1857.

† After Delhi had been taken, a much greater impression would have been produced by the news spreading of our actual generosity, deliberate judgment, and mercy, than by the most extensive promises of amnesty. Unfortunately the general voice was for terror, and much regret was expressed that the life of the old King of Delhi had been promised to him. The greatest error committed was the execution of the Nawab of Jhujjer and the Rajah of Bullubghur at Delhi, especially that of the latter, who had assisted European fugitives, and merely offered ceremonial homage to his ancient sovereign, the King of Delhi. The moderate punishment and disgrace of these two chieftains, and the pardon of their families, would have had a most beneficial and reassuring effect.



observance had to be sternly enforced, and contravention severely visited.

They know little of the actual state of India in March, 1858, of the temper of men's minds in those days, they can divine little of the hopes and speculations of an ignorant nation in its first rebellion, who think that Lord Canning was wrong in insisting on Lucknow being assaulted and occupied, before the campaign in Rohilcund was commenced. Every day that Lucknow was held, and the semblance of a Government kept up there by the Begum and other leaders, added to the chances of a fresh rebellion breaking out in some other province, far or near, either in our own dominions or in those of some native prince. The capture of Lucknow made what was deemed a hopeful cause appear a losing one, and put a stop at once to the spread of the insurrectionary spirit among the people.

The Oude proclamation was wrong in its terms, wrong in being a proclamation at all, and wrong in having been allowed to make its appearance in an English form; but it was right in its intention, and necessary in its effect. The powers claimed by it were claimed for a benevolent purpose, really for a purpose of restitution, and not, as ostensibly, of confiscation. But if its actual and literal purport be insisted on, it was indefensible, illogical, inconsistent, and contradictory. And the reply to Lord Ellenborough's condemnatory



despatch, though offered as a defence and a solution, only makes the affair more complicated and more contradictory. So far as the resistance in Oude and other provinces is concerned, no harm whatever was done by the proclamation: and most certainly no effect, good or bad, was produced by the publication of Lord Ellenborough's despatch.

I cannot but feel a suspicion that in this matter of the Lucknow proclamation, as in the entire explanation of his policy and plan of settlement for Oude, and in other points, Lord Canning has failed to do justice to himself, and has suffered a loss of credit in proportion, from a certain delicacy and tenderness in touching upon the deeds of his immediate predecessor; and that the public is thus deprived of information and intelligence to which it is entitled, and light is withheld from the greatest dangers and weaknesses of the Empire.

I see no reason at present for losing confidence in Lord Canning; but whether he continues to work harmoniously with the present Ministry or not, or if any other reason should withdraw him from India before the termination of the usual period, I trust he will be replaced by another English statesman, and not by any Indian official, however distinguished and however experienced.



LETTER XX.

PROSPECTS.

December, 1858.

THE British Empire in India must be governed on British principles, or it will gradually become a source of weakness, danger, and disgrace, instead of being a source of wealth, honour, and military strength.

I think the previous letters contain a few suggestions as to the causes of the rebellion which will convince the reason and touch the conscience and the heart of many an English officer, who has been unable to accept either the greased cartridge, or the ingratitude and cruelty of Asiatics, as adequate to explain so tremendous a convulsion. For my part, I hold the question, "What was the cause of the Indian Rebellion of 1857?" to be as incapable of a concise answer as the question, "What was the cause of the great French Revolution?"

And some suggestions have also been given as to those practical reforms which would vitalize the Empire, would promote the permanent enlightenment of the people by a natural and voluntary process, without the artificial and ill-directed interference of Government, and would institute those human rela-



tions between the dominant and the pupil race, without which there can be no social security, no imperial power, and no true progress.

The next ten years of our rule will form a most critical period; and on the use that is made of our lessons and of our opportunities will depend the future stability of our Empire.

If we still continue blinded with the pride and prejudices of race, and creed, and custom, and refuse or postpone indefinitely all measures of just conciliation and encouragement, it is possible that peace may be prolonged,—though it will really be only a truce,—and through a wise economy, skilful financial measures, and a judicious expenditure on public works, the revenue may increase, and with it the material prosperity and content of the masses. But whether our moral influence and power can advance, whether England can thus fulfil the glorious task confided to her, may be more doubtful.

Nay,—whether England contributes her full share to it or not, we may be sure that, however scanty its symptoms and slow its movement at present, the progress of the Indian people in knowledge is going on, and will not cease: but no thanks will be given to England; the progress will be all against us, adverse to our interests and derogatory to our fame. May that time never come when, having been too selfish and careless in a period of passive submission,



and now too proud to yield to agitation, we screw down the safety-valve, and trust to the strength of the machinery. If ever we, forgetting our English faith and traditions, and declining any intellectual contest, adopt restrictions and violent coercion, and oppose our physical force, and our physical force alone, to the enormous numbers of awakened and conscious India, *then* will be the beginning of the end.

But it shall not be so. Centuries must elapse, if peace continues, before India can be capable of self-government without retrogression; but let us so associate and initiate our Indian brethren in the rule of their own country, and in its political relations with England, that they may see how the interests of each and all are combined; so that when the fulness of time has come, the sceptre may be committed to no unaccustomed hands, and the British Empire in India be closed with mutual benefits and brotherly congratulations, and not with a confused noise and with garments rolled in blood.

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THE END. *Ev*

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